

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

lumber. The blades, which sell for about \$23 apiece, can be sharpened up to three times. Depending on the wood, we can saw anywhere from 700 to 1,000 times on one blade per sharpening. We didn't get a lot of optional equipment for it, such as log loaders or log turners, because all those extra hydraulics just drive up the price."

Bert Gunnary, Annandale, Minn.: "I like my **Olympus D-360L** digital camera. It's easy to use and takes great photos."

Lacey Armitage, Dryden, N.Y.: "My **Cub Cadet 2135** garden tractor is my worst buy. For the money I could have bought two Sears garden tractors, which would have been a far better value. The Cub Cadet is difficult to work on - it's a two-man job just to get the mower deck on and off. It reminds me of the early snowmobiles - ride an hour and then spend the rest of the day doing maintenance work."

Paul Fox, Prospect Harbor, Maine: Paul likes his 1998 **Stanley-Bostich** roofing and coil framing nailers. "I've used them to build several farm buildings and to re-roof several more. Both nailers have performed flawlessly. They greatly reduce construction time and save wear and tear on my arms and shoulders."

"My 2000 **Suzuki King Quad** ATV equipped with a Wam winch is my best buy. It has 15 available ratios which, combined with the ATV's 3-speed subtransmission and 4-wheel lock, provide the winch with a speed to match every task. I use it to do everything from hauling firewood and feed to building fence, woodland fire fighting, and recreational riding. I wish I would've bought it years ago."

Troy Plocinski, Williamsport, Penn.: A **Clarke 150 Turbo Mig** welder rates as Troy's "best buy". "I bought it for about \$100 less than a 100-amp **Lincoln Mig** welder I was also looking at, and it also has 150 more amps. It's built better than many other mig welders. I give the company an A+ for this machine."

"MTD products are my worst buys. I've repaired a few MTD lawn and garden tractors over the years and have always found them to be cheaply constructed in every way. They have an undersized transmission, Rube Goldberg-type attachment mountings, and tinny frames. I don't think I'd take a new one if you gave it to me."

Tim Bishop, Roaring Branch, Penn.: "Tim's impressed with his **Case-IH 5140** Maxxum tractor. "It has about 7,800 hours on it with no transmission problems. The forward reverser is awesome."

"I also like my **Case-IH 8950** tractor. The standard features on these two tractors are better than on other brands."

August Chabot, Kaycee, Wyo.: "I'm well pleased with my 2000 **Ford F-150 XLT** pickup. It has about 18,000 miles on it and so far my only expense has been for gas and routine maintenance. It rides and drives as well as a passenger car."

Thomas Stenberg, Volga, S. Dak.: A 1995 **Gehl 970** tandem axle forage wagon rates as Thomas's "best buy". "I use this large forage box as a feeder wagon. It holds a lot of feed and allows me to feed more than 200 cows at a time with it. I mounted a larger sprocket on the front discharge apron in order to slow it down."

"My 1991 **Case-IH Maxxum 5130** front wheel assist tractor equipped with a front-end loader is my worst buy. I've had to

replace the wheel seals on the front wheel assist five times. The problem is that bale strings wrap around and cut out the seal. Finally I had to make a device to cut strings

"I've had to replace seals on the front wheel assist five times."

before they can wrap around the seals. If this tractor is sold as a loader tractor, why didn't the company design something to prevent damage to the wheel seals? This tractor has also had problems with leaky hydraulics."

David Rau, Pana, Ill.: "My best buy is my **Deere AMT 600** which I bought used. I use it every day to check fences and livestock."

John Westerhoff, Alexandria, Neb.: "We bought a **Case-IH 12-row** no-till planter equipped with an Orthman hydraulic drive and Rebounder seed furrow closing attachments on it. The Orthman hydraulic drive lets us change population rates on-the-go and results in a more uniform seed drop. The Rebounder seed furrow closing attachments (Schaeffert Mfg. Corp., Inc., Rt. 1, Box 157, Indianola, Neb. 69034 ph 800 382-2607) pass above the bottom of the seed trench without putting pressure on the seed. It results in a quicker and more uniform germination, especially on clay ground. They also work well to apply pop-up fertilizer."

"My **Deere 9500** combine does a wonderful job and has been trouble-free."

"My 1987 **Ford Taurus** car is my worst buy. The engine tended to vapor lock whenever the weather got warm. I fought this problem for years. Finally I traded it for a Chrysler model which has been trouble-free."

Steven Zaring, Withee, Wis.: "In the early 1980's I bought a **Milwaukee 9-volt** cordless electric drill. I've used it more than any other hand tool I've ever owned. I needed more power for tapping maple trees, so I recently replaced it with a new 14-volt model. I sold the 9-volt unit for half of what I originally paid for it."

John M. Shidler, Lawrenceville, Ill.: "My **Blue Jet 7-shank** deep ripper is my best buy. It really does a good job. When I use it in hard ground, it lifts the ground up but doesn't disturb the residue on top. It's a well-built machine."

Mike Lee, Middlebury, Ind.: "My **Kinze 2600** in-line folding planter is my best buy. I can pull it into a field and be planting in only two or three minutes. We haven't had any problems with it, and last year we had our best stand of corn ever. I really like the in-line folding feature. It makes the planter easy to work on because everything is at eye level."

On the minus side, he lists his **Phillips** rotary harrow. "What this machine does in the field and what you see on company videos are two very different things. We don't know how we're supposed to use it. We've tried it on corn stalks and soybeans with poor results."

Jack Lamb, Lusk, Wyo.: "Our 1999 **M & W** wheel rake is our best buy. We had to readjust tension arms on the wheel and since then the rake has done a super job. It rakes well at high speed and makes beautiful windrows that don't blow away in the wind. I'd recommend this rake to anyone."

"E-Mail Only" System Handy & Cheap

Roscoe and Emma Lane, Blythedale, Missouri, have six children and more than a dozen grandchildren, all living a long distance call away. They decided they could save a lot of money and stay in touch more easily if they could use e-mail, especially since all of their kids are on-line.

"We do have a computer but we didn't want to pay for the internet just to send e-mail," says Roscoe, a retired farmer and rural letter carrier. "Also, we like to travel a lot and we can't take our computer with us."

They decided to look into "e-mail only" systems which do not require a hefty monthly contract. All you need is a keyboard-like device that hooks to a phone line.

The Mail Station system they bought required an initial setup fee of \$50 and purchase of the e-mail device for around \$100. The monthly service fee is \$9.95.

The Lanes chose Mail Station for a couple reasons. One was the size of the device's keyboard, which is longer than on other systems. "I couldn't type on the smaller ones. My fingers are just too big," says Roscoe.



Another reason was that the device hooks up to a number of printers, so they can print their e-mail to read it.

When the couple travels, they generally go in their travel trailer. They can hook their Mail Station into phone lines provided at campsites and retrieve their email.

"The machine dials in and retrieves mail by itself, so we don't even have to remember the number," Emma says.

Many discount stores and electronics retailers handle the Mail Station, and other competing "e-mail only" devices.

Contact: **FARM SHOW** Followup, Mail Station, Cidco, Inc., 220 Cochrane Circle, Morgan Hill, CA 95037 (ph 408 779-1162; E-mail: feedback@cidco.com; Web site: www.mailstation.com/products/index.html).

Ed Coleman, Farwell, Mich.: "My 1987 **Chevrolet 1/2-ton 4-WD** pickup, 1990 **GM 1/2-ton 4-WD** pickup, and 1992 **Chevrolet 3/4-ton 4-WD** pickup are all best buys. I put about 185,000 miles on the 1987 Chevrolet model and sold it for half of its original new price. The GM model had about 232,000 miles on it when I sold it for \$6,500. The 1992 Chevrolet model has about 165,000 miles on it and is still going strong. No engine repairs have been necessary on any of these vehicles. I used 15-40 Deere diesel oil in all three vehicles. We also own a 1995 **GM Yukon** that has about 84,000 miles on it, but we did have to repair the rear differential on it. However, I still think it's a good vehicle."

"My worst buy is **Armstrong** self-adhesion floor tile. The glue on back of the tiles comes up through the joints. It never seems to dry which allows the tile to slide and opens the joints for months after it's laid down. On the positive side, this tile is relatively inexpensive - about 50 cents per sq. foot. I guess you get what you pay for."

Richard Spaulding, Waldport, Ore.: "I like my 2000 **Chevrolet Silverado 2500** heavy duty pickup. The 6.0-liter engine has

"It's too loud, rides rough, and the deck plugs up too easily."

a lot of power and is reasonably fuel efficient. I especially like the 4-wheel disc brakes - they're second to none."

Bradley L. Baxter, St. Louis, Mich.: Bradley's impressed with his **Case-IH 2388** combine. "It produces a clean threshing sample, with no broken grain. It's also easy to work on and has a lot of power. I like the controls in the cab."

"My **Cub Cadet** garden tractor is my worst buy. It's too loud, rides rough, and the deck plugs up too easily."

Wayne W. Hunter, Greenwich, Ohio: "I'm 82 years old but I still take care of 310

acres, although most of it is in CRP ground. My 1958 **International M** tractor still runs great. The engine on it has required only one overhaul since it was new.

"My **International 574** tractor has 4,000 hours on it and the engine has never been overhauled."

Richard Strayer, LaGrange, Ind.: "I like my **Lincoln Power Lube 12-volt** cordless grease gun which I bought about a year ago. It was a little awkward to use at first but turned out to be real handy once I got used to it. What's nice is that I don't need three hands to grease any fittings. I use one hand to hold the gun on the fitting and the other hand to operate the trigger. It's much more powerful than a hand pump. I had to replace the hose when it broke."

"My 5-year-old **Makita 1/2-in.** electric drill is my worst buy. The chuck doesn't work right. I have to use a wrench to move the chuck even when it doesn't have a bit in it. The hardware store that I bought the drill from sent it back to the company, but they didn't do much with it. It worked better since I got it back, but still doesn't work right."

Lewis Childress, Lowell, Ind.: "My **MTD Ranch King** riding mower is my best buy. I like the gear pattern and the ease of varying the rig's forward speed. However, I do have one complaint. If I try to mow the grass less than 3 1/2 in. high, the mower leaves the clippings in windrows. As a result, I have to set all our mowers to cut the grass about 4 in. high."

Larry D. Hawkinson, Hoven, S. Dak.: "Our 1987 **Murray** mower is equipped with a 14 hp engine and 42-in. deck, as well as a bagger. It does a good job and cuts evenly. It still has the original drive belts on it."

Paul Gullett, Palestine, Ill.: "I like my **Deere 335** garden tractor equipped with a 48-in. deck. I put more than 600 hours on it last year with no major problems. I like the power steering and hydraulic lift. I also like the cruise control. We used it to mow 13 cemeteries and 123 yards. I think Deere

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