

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

By: Mark Newhall
Editor

Bill Gergen
Associate Editor

Jim Houtsma
Associate Editor

Leon Bitker, K&L, Inc., Fosston, Minn.: Dealers can get stuck with “lemons”, too, reports Leon Bitker, who runs a farm equipment dealership. He’s had trouble with **Rhino** tractors. “Rhino International imports the tractors from China and assembles them. We took delivery of several of the tractors but we can’t keep them running. We had over \$7,000 worth of warranty work on one tractor (including two hydraulic systems) which we can’t get reimbursed for. We finally took the tractor back from the farmer so we wouldn’t lose a customer. We’ve found gravel in the transmission and hydraulic systems, and the electrical systems are screwed up. We had to rewire them ourselves.

“We contacted the company and asked them to get the tractors out of here but so far we can’t get a satisfactory response. I know of several other dealers with the same problem. So far we’ve put out nearly \$60,000 for the tractors and warranty work. The worst part is that my customers see these tractors sitting on the lot and wonder why we have them if they’re no good. It reflects badly on me as a dealer.

“Rhino International was recently bought out by the Alamo Group. We’re

cently bought a used **International** 1086 tractor. “It has a lot of power for its size and a quiet cab even though the tractor doesn’t have a muffler. I also like my **International** 966 tractor which is equipped with an M & W turbocharger kit. It’s a super tractor - no problems at all.”

David Faulkner, Sweetwater, Tenn.: David nominates his 1994 **Deere** 535 round baler as his “best buy”. “My brother and I have used it without any problems to bale straw, hay, and corn stalks. It’ll make whatever size bale we want. It doesn’t cost me any more than other balers we priced.”

Horace J. McGuffin, McGuffin Welding, Sanger, Texas: A 1985 **Lincoln** diesel welder powered by a 3-cyl. Perkins engine rates as Horace’s “best buy”. “I use it six days a week and have put more than 9,000 hours on it. I paid \$4,100 for it. I bought a new model last week that cost almost \$8,000. Why so much?”

Howard Book, Miles, Texas: “It’s the most enjoyable tractor to operate that I own. It’s easy and actually fun to drive,” says Howard about his 1995 **Deere** 7800 MFWD tractor. “No problems after 1,000 hours.”

On the negative side, he lists his **Tube-O-Lator** big round bale bagger. “It should use a heavier bag to prevent rodent damage. Another problem is that it’s very tricky to operate - there’s no room for error regarding bale size. If the bale is too big you can’t force it in or you’ll tear up the machine. If the bale is too small the bag will be too loose and let in air which will allow the bales to mold.

“I also had problems with my 1996 **Deere** 3830 windrower. It hadn’t been set up properly before it was delivered to my farm. I had already sold my old 3830 windrower to another farmer, and I had to hire him to cut my crop while the new windrower sat in the shop. I finally sold it.”

Bob Minner, Fallon, Nevada: “It barely misses a tie and has a lot of capacity,” says Bob, pleased with his 1995 **Hesston** 4900 4 by 4 1-ton baler. “I’ve used it to make more than 9,000 bales with very few problems. I often operate the baler day and night.”

Frances M. Chance, Flora, Ala.: Frances owns a “best buy” 1996 **Grasshopper** 720 riding mower. “It has enough speed and power to do any job. But the best thing about it is the blades. Last year I cut two to three acres every week and never even had to sharpen them.”

Ronald J. Popp, Charlestown, Ind.: “My best buy is my 1981 **International** 1420 Axial Flow combine which I bought used. I’ve put a lot of hours on it with no major problems. It does a great job cleaning grain and is easy to set and service. Best of all, it’s comfortable to operate.”

On the minus side, he lists 1,000 and 1,500-gal. plastic spray tanks made by **Raven**. “The tanks have moldings on them for chains, but they’re made wrong so the chains continually slip off. There’s no way to keep the tanks tied down no matter how hard you try.”

Edward Mann, Wilkie, Sask.: “My 1993 **White** 6145 front wheel assist tractor is fuel efficient and has a lot of power. It’s also easy to service. I’ve used it to do a variety of tasks and it always does a good job. It doesn’t use any oil, either.”

Cornie Van Lant, Chandler, Minn.: Cornie’s impressed with his 1996 **Dodge** Ram 1500 4-WD pickup equipped with a Magnum 360 diesel engine. “I’ve owned five Dodge pickups over the years and had great luck with all of them. I’ve used them to haul a lot of loads of corn and beans.”

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

hopeful we can resolve the situation without going to court but, so far, we haven’t had any luck.”

David R. Schutz, Cayuga, Ind.: “My best buy is my 1994 **Dodge** Ram 2500 pickup. The 360 cu. in. engine has a lot of power, and the pickup rides smooth and quiet. I’d rather drive it than my car. Even though it’s three years old I think I could sell it for almost as much as I paid for it.”

Kenneth J. Hunter, Hayti, S. Dak.: “After four years of use in rocky soil it has held up exceptionally well,” says Kenneth about his **New Idea** 5212 disc mower-conditioner.

On the “worst buy” side, “My **Deere** 7800 MFWD tractor equipped with a powershift transmission is the most disgusting piece of equipment I’ve bought in 40 years of farming. Whoever dubbed the transmission as the ‘Jerk-o-matic’ was 100 percent right.”

L.D. Park, Independence, Ore.: “My 1996 **Homelite** Super 2 chain saw equipped with a 16-in. bar and automatic oiler is my worst buy. I couldn’t get the automatic chain oiler to work at all so I took the saw back to the dealer. He gave me a new one but the chain oiler on that saw wouldn’t work, either. Another problem is that the engine either runs like a racehorse or quits. Finally I took the saw to an authorized repair shop. Now the chain oiler works some, but the engine still doesn’t run any better.”

Dave Glick, Ashville, Ohio: Dave re-