

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

sold for no-till use. The bearing isn't adequately supported and wallows out of the housing that contains it."

Mike Myers, Fredonia, Kansas: Mike's the satisfied owner of a 2000 **Deere** 335 lawn and garden tractor equipped with a 54-in. deck. "The tractor is powered by a 20 hp Kawasaki engine and handles anything we throw at it. We use it to mow lawns for many local homeowners, churches, and businesses. It always cuts a smooth, even swath and is easy to handle and maintain."

Tim King, Pegram, Tenn.: "I like my **Deere** chain saw equipped with a 20-in. bar and chain. It does an excellent job and always starts right up on the first pull. I've never had to work on it other than to do normal cleaning and maintenance. It just keeps begging for more work."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1999 **Troy-bilt** "Bronco" rear tine tiller. "If you happen to snag a root, the tiller swings you around and your hands get stuck on the handles. I paid \$740 for it and used it only twice for a total of four hours. I complained to Lowes, the home improvement retailer where I bought the machine, and also to the manufacturer. They both said 'tough luck' I'll never buy another Troy-bilt product again."

Donald D. Whitehill, Elmo, Mo.: "I like my 2000 **Chevrolet** 2500 pickup equipped with a 300 hp engine. I use it to pull a 24-ft. livestock trailer, which it handles very well. This pickup has a lot of power and is reasonably fuel efficient."

Larry Gregerson, Herman, Neb.: Larry's impressed with his 2002 **Deere** 1770 16-row no-till planter. "I can fold the planter from the tractor cab. Once it's folded, it's no wider than the dual wheels on my tractor. The company sent people from the factory to monitor the planter's performance in the field and to evaluate some minor changes and updates. Support has been great."

"My 2001 **Deere** 9650 STS combine does a fine job. It has plenty of capacity for my 8-row corn head and 25-ft. platform."

Lorin Peters, Greenfield, Ind.: "My son mounted a **Case** backhoe on a 4-wheel trailer that we had been using to haul our skid steer



loader. All we do is hook it up to our International Harvester 1066 tractor and it's ready to go. We use it to install water lines. Works fine and has saved us many hours of hard work and expense."

Pat Field, Pendroy, Mont.: Pat's the satisfied owner of a 2002 **Mil-Stack** bale loader for handling mid-size square bales weighing up to 1,600 lbs. (Mil-Stack, Inc., 1350 Glenway, Fruitland, Idaho 83619 ph 208 452-6045). It works perfect and lets one person pile a lot of bales in a hurry. We mounted it on our New Holland 1068 automatic bale stack wagon, which we had been using to load and unload small square

bales.

The add-on attachment picks up bales in the field and loads them onto the stack wagon.

To switch back to small square bales, you simply unbolt the unit and replace the original small square bale loader.

"This bale picker speeds things up a lot," says Field.

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2001 **Dodge** Durango equipped with a 4.7-liter engine. "It drives nice but gets only 13 1/2 to 14 mpg, which I think is terrible. We previously owned a 1998 Durango equipped with a 5.2-liter engine and it got 14 1/2 mpg. The smaller engine should do better. My old 1972 Dodge pickup equipped with a 400 cu. in. engine gets 12 mpg, and it's 30 years old."

Randy Edwards, Kenmore, N. Dak.: A 1999 **Polaris** 300 4-wheeler rates as Randy's "best buy". "I use it for everything from dragging our driveway to spraying crops, checking fields, and hauling rocks. I haven't had to spend anything on repairs. All I do is keep it filled with gas."

"My 1993 **GM** K2500 4-WD pickup was one of my worst buys ever. In the first 9-month's during which I drove 9,000 miles, I had to replace two engines, a rear end, a transmission, and a computer part. On the day I bought the pickup, the muffler fell off before I even got home."

Tom Woods, Graham, Wash.: Tom's the owner of a 1999 **Buell** M2 motorcycle which he says is his "worst buy". "The motorcycle itself works good, but parts for it are all but impossible to get. I'm still waiting for touch-up paint that I paid for two months ago."

Melvin Knaack, Gladbrook, Iowa: "My best buy is the 1992 **Cox** Row Zone unit that I pull ahead of my planter. It's a one-trip planting system that carries most of the fertilizer load. The Cox frame and planter raise and lower independently. Fertilizer is mixed under the row so only the plant can use it, boosting yields with only about half the fertilizer. It lowers the cost of herbicide and insecticide inputs because trash is left in the middle of the rows, mixed with soil in mini ridges. Chemicals are placed in narrow row bands on the dome of the row ridge

"It makes a great seedbed and has reduced what I spend on planter parts by about 75 percent."

Loren Pierce, Tomah, Wis.: Loren's impressed with his 2001 **Chevrolet** Silverado pickup. "This is my seventh Silverado and I've been happy with all of them. It rides great, has a lot of power, and looks nice."

LeRoy Witte, Jasper, Ind.: "My best buy is my **Toro** WheelHorse lawn mower equipped with a bagger and recycler. Both add-ons work great."

Neale D. Wade, Merrill, Wis.: "My **Yamaha** 4-wheeler is easy on fuel and is always ready to go."

On the negative side, "The main bearing on my **Deere** 120 electric pressure washer won't last. The company doesn't have parts for it and says it can't get them."

Blake Engleka, Poquoson, Va.: Blake nominates his **Stihl** 021 chain saw as his "best buy". "It does an excellent job of cutting and is a great saw for the money. No problems at all."

"My worst buy was my 1997 **Remington** Viper .22 caliber gun. The first day I got it, it jammed and it took us about 30 minutes to solve the problem. Every time I use this gun it jams."

Erling Swiggum, Dodgeville, Wis.: "My

Semi Tractor Converted To Fertilizer Spreading Truck

When Clair and Warren Wilson, Winchester, Ill., bought a used 1980 semi tractor and fifth wheel trailer in the late 1980's, they never guessed that some day they would be able to sell the rig for more than they paid for it.

The semi cost \$5,500 and was powered by a big 466 cu. in. diesel engine. The cab had recently been in a fire so they had to rebuild it.

"We used it to haul fertilizer, grain and machinery. It could pull big cultivators out of fields and down roads much more easily than a pickup ever could have," notes Clair.

The Wilsons finally decided to sell the rig. They knew they could get a much better price if the semi tractor was equipped with a box instead of a fifth wheel trailer. They had the bed from an old New Leader single axle, 2-ton fertilizer spreader truck sitting in their shed and decided to install it on the semi tractor's chassis. It fit perfectly. Then they went looking for a buyer.

"The buyer we found wanted to use the truck in his custom fertilizer spreading business. He asked us to install a new air-operated pto to drive the belt conveyor and a 2-in. receiver hitch on back, which we did. He uses the hitch to pull machinery on the road during the off-season," says Clair.

"We sold the truck for \$7,500, and I charged another \$250 to install the hitch. The semi tractor probably wouldn't have sold for more than \$3,000 if it had still been equipped with the fifth wheel trailer. The buyer says it makes a really good fertilizer spreading truck."



Clair and Warren Wilson mounted the box from a single axle, 2-ton fertilizer spreader truck on their semi tractor.



They installed an air-operated pto to drive the belt conveyor and added a 2-in. receiver hitch on back for pulling machinery on the road.

It has a lot of power, and has a shorter wheelbase than a single axle 2-ton truck so it can turn short in the field. It also has a heavier rear end and a heavier front axle than a 2-ton truck."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clair and Warren Wilson, 132 Hillview Rd., Winchester, Ill. 62694 (ph 217 742-3918).

Harvestore silo is my best buy. It's easy to fill and unload. I do have to run the unloader occasionally whenever I start to fill the silo so the unloader doesn't bog down. This silo helped me double my milk production from about 350,000 pounds a year to 699,000 pounds. It will pay for itself in three years."

Glen Swier, Colton, S. Dak.: Glen's had problems with a building that he bought last year from **American Steel Buildings Corporation**. "I wanted a building that could be used both as a machine shed and grain storage shed. So last fall I went to the Dakota Fest farm show in order to gather information from different companies. At the show I met a salesman for American Steel and ended up purchasing a 51 by 100-ft. arch building."

"While hiring people to do foundation work for the building, I discovered that I didn't have the right floor plans. I called three different company representatives about the problem, but not one returned my calls. Frustrating."

"The building was finally put up and we did receive all the materials for it. However, there would have been no way for us to put the building up ourselves, like the salesman said we would be able to do. We ended up hiring a contractor and it took him two weeks to do the job."

Mark Brubaker, Rochester, Ind.: Mark has more than 231,000 hard miles on his 1992 **Dodge** Dakota 2-WD extended cab pickup. The pickup is equipped with a V-8 engine and an automatic overdrive transmission. "All I've had to replace was the starter, distributor, and fuel pump. The pickup still has its original water pump, alternator, and fan belt. It runs great and uses only about one

quart of oil every 3,000 miles. I'd buy another one of these in a flash."

On the minus side, he lists his **Yard Man** lawn and garden tractor equipped with a 17 hp engine and 42-in. mower deck. "Whenever I back it up, the front wheels toe-in so severely that at times the tractor wheels start spinning and the tractor won't move. The deck is just as poorly engineered, with no way to adjust tension on the deck belt. Replacement belts from the company are poor. After only a few hours of use they stretch and slip."

Jim Jacobsen, Luverne, N. Dak.: Jim nominates **Micada** add-on hopper bottoms for grain bins as his "best buy". "About five years ago I had a grain bin that had a lot of rust and was in need of repair, so I started looking for a hopper bottom for it. I checked with several companies that made hopper bottoms and decided to go with Micada. The company was nothing but professional. They delivered the hopper bottom to my farm and set it up. It converted my old bin into a new drying hopper bin that dries down any product I put in it. The salesman I worked with helped me choose the aeration system to fit my needs."

"Since I bought that first hopper bottom I've purchased four others and plan to buy more. In my opinion it's the best one on the market." (Micada, Box 57, Hope, N. Dak. 58046 ph 800 270 2701).

Joy Roberts, Deer Park, Wash.: "My 1991 **Ride King** 8 hp riding mower is my best buy. I can't say enough good things about it. It's the best money I've ever spent. I use it

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