

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

molded plastic chassis. My next saw definitely won't be a Poulan."

**Mike Stark, Hixton, Wis.:** "My 2005 Case 435 skid steer loader equipped with a coupler latch hydraulic system and a cab is my worst buy. I'm not pleased with how the quick coupler latch is designed. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I have to pull on the steering levers to make it work which, during normal operation, causes the system to put extra stress on the coupler system. The Case cab has a small opening which makes it hard to get in and out. The heater breather is located outside the cab and extends over the roof, which makes it difficult to get into our low barn."

**Joseph S. Erdahl, Mobile, Ala.:** "I like my 2001 Ford Crown Victoria LX. I purchased it in Tacoma, Wash., and drove it home fully loaded with a cargo of books and clothes. It averaged 28.63 mpg at 68 mph, which I think is pretty good. It has a 4.6-liter engine with a single exhaust and a 2.73 ratio rear end. It's a shame the company stopped making this car."

**Raymond Schoen, Pocola, Okla.:** "My best buy is my 1990 Chevrolet 1500 pickup. It averages 25 mpg on the highway and 20 mpg in local driving. It has about 160,000 miles on it."

**Leora Patterson, Roseburg, Oregon:** "Our 2002 Berkefeld 'Big Berkey' water filter is our best buy ([www.berkefilters.com](http://www.berkefilters.com)). The company's advertising claims aren't exaggerated. We couldn't live without it."

**Walter J. Gray, Vidor, Texas:** Walter nominates his two Poulan Pro chain saws as his "worst buys". "I live in an area that was devastated by Hurricane Rita. My son drove home from Ohio to help clean up, and on his way home he stopped at Lowes and bought a 20-in. Poulan Pro chain saw. We were able to use it only one day before the oiler quit working. But after going through one tank of gas the second saw quit running, too. We went back to Lowes again and they tried to start it with no luck. This time I got store credit. However, there were no other saws available so I had to get someone else to cut up the tree. So now I have a Husqvarna 18 in., 3 hp model, and I wouldn't trade it for anything."

**Dave Clark, Goderich, Ontario:** Dave's impressed with his 2005 Stihl MS 180C chain saw equipped with an "Easy 2-Start" option. "Over the years I've used at least five different brands of gas-powered chain saws, and Stihl models have worked at least as good as any of the others. However some brands, including Stihl's, tend to pre-ignite and pull the starter rope out of my hand - especially when they're hot. This little 180 model is quite light, and when you pull the starter rope you wind up a spring that in turn rolls over the motor. It takes a little getting used to because of the soft pull, but so far I really like it."

"My 2004 Deere 870A side delivery manure spreader is my worst buy. If I put just one loader bucket too much manure in it, I could leave a 135 hp tractor running flat out while I did the chores, ate supper, watched the news and had a snooze before the spreader would even start to unload. The rotor bearings on this spreader seldom lasted more than six months, and changing them is a half day job. Before long the flail chains stretched so that whenever a bearing went out, the flails would beat a hole in the spreader's body. Fortunately, only eight bolts held the box to the tandem running gear so it was easy to cut them off to convert it into a trailer. I cut the rest of the spreader up for scrap."

**Kenneth L. Verhoeven, Danville, Ill.:** "My 2005 Kubota BX 1500, powered by a 2-cyl. diesel engine, is a nice, efficient tractor. It's built like a real tractor and is equipped with full hydraulics, a front-end loader, 54-in. mower deck, rear-mounted blade, mid and rear pto, 3-pt. hitch, lights, etc. It's reasonably priced. No problems so far"

**Philip Brambley, Crystal Spring, Penn.:** "My 1996 Schulte 7400 twin-stage snowblower is my best buy. We got 3 ft. of snow on a Monday so I started calling around for a snowblower. A local dealer delivered this model the following Friday evening. It wasn't my first choice, but I hooked it up to my tractor. To my surprise, the next day I was able to move more snow in six hours than I had been able to plow all week long. The only problem was with two broken shear bolts caused by picking up rocks."



**Victor Daniels, Jr., Sterling, Mich.:** "My 2005 Central Boiler Classic outdoor wood burning furnace is my best buy. I used it last November for the first time. By adding wood every 12 to 24 hours it burned until last March when I stopped adding wood. Heat is transferred to our existing hot water heating system by a heat exchanger. I can use very large pieces of unsplit firewood and they'll burn completely."

**Greg Nelson, Warner Springs, Calif.:** "It's one of my best buys ever," says Greg about his 2004 Montana 4540 compact tractor. "We use it with a 72-in. mower, box blade, front-end loader, and to pull an 18-ft. trailer. It has far surpassed my expectations for quality and price. It was well worth the trip I made to Texas to buy it."

"My 1986 Ford F-250 4-WD extended cab diesel pickup equipped with an 8-ft. bed is a



**Ed H. Jensen, Wellsville, Utah:** Last year Ed bought a used 1996 Suzuki 4-WD mini truck imported from Japan that he says is his "best buy". "It's a very practical, useful vehicle and a great value. It's a definite step up from 4-wheeler ATV's, utility vehicles, etc."

The Suzuki is equipped with a 3-cyl., 660 cc gas engine and 4-speed transmission. It has a cab, heater and rides on 13-in. mud and snow radial tires. It had about 60,000 miles on it when Jensen bought it from Larry Brunner in Arizona (ph 928 300-2330).

"I bought it for \$4,900. I used to have a Kawasaki Mule which I used to carry feed and tools around for making repairs in the field. It was convenient and I liked it, but it wasn't quite big enough for my needs and was underpowered. Also, it had low clearance at the rear axle so I kept getting stuck."

"Over the years I've had several different brands of ATV's but in my opinion ATV's are overrated. There's no place to carry any-

best buy. We've used it to haul firewood in our commercial business, to tow a 24-ft. camping trailer, and to make many trips into town. I installed a Banks Sidewinder Turbo on the engine about 10 years ago. The turbo really helps when towing up steep grades and also got rid of the 'smoking like a locomotive' problem it was having. This pickup now has about 120,000 miles on it, and I'm looking forward to another 120,000 miles and 20 more years of service. When I bought it 20 years ago I thought the \$18,000 price tag was steep, but now I wouldn't sell it or trade it for a new truck costing \$25,000 to \$30,000."

**Murray Woods, Linden, Alberta:** Murray's impressed with his 2004 Honeybee 30-ft. draper header (Honey Bee Mfg. Ltd., Frontier, Sask. ph 306 296-2297; [www.honeybee.ca](http://www.honeybee.ca)). "It cuts evenly in tough conditions and follows the ground for cutting crops like peas, and it feeds the crop evenly into the combine. I gained 25 percent more capacity because I was able to increase the combine's ground speed."

**Richard Gribbins, Bradfordsville, Ky.:** "My Ford 2600 loader tractor has more than 10,000 hours on it and is a best buy. Nothing

thing on them, and if you put stuff on top of the pipe racks it falls through. The Suzuki has 4-WD, a payload capacity of 1,000 lbs., and is very comfortable to drive. It doesn't have a block heater, but the engine always starts right up even in the coldest weather."

"I have a cow-calf operation and use it to haul hay grain to cattle on pasture. I also use it to drive to town to get parts. I got a license so I can drive it on the highway. I didn't have a title for it so getting it registered to drive on the highway was a bit of a hassle. Top speed is about 50 mph. I also have a Dodge pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine, but my Suzuki is more convenient and cheaper to operate. I leave the Dodge parked in the garage most of the time."

"Two people can ride comfortably. I've never checked it for fuel efficiency, but the fuel tank holds a little more than five gallons and I only fill it every two to three weeks. I'd recommend this vehicle to anyone."

has been done to the engine. It has gone through a couple of clutches, a rebuilt starter, and three water pumps."

**James Lines, High Prairie, Alberta:** A 2005 Ariens Zoom 1540 zero turn riding mower rates as James's "best buy". "This mower is reasonably priced and has reduced my cutting time from five hours to one hour. I can go about 4 mph and still get a nice cut. The deck height can be adjusted anywhere from 1 to 7 in. off the ground. It's a wonderful lawn mower."

**Justin Herron, Constantine, Mich.:** "My 2005 White zero turn riding mower equipped with a 50-in. deck is my best buy. I saved about \$1,500 compared to a Cub Cadet equipped with the same motor, frame, and features. It starts right up every time and runs perfect. I can cut four acres with it in only about 1 1/2 hours."

"My 2005 Polaris 700 cc Sportsman is my worst buy. It has only about 40 hours on it but already I've had to rebuild the carburetor, lost screws in the plastic parts, and had to buy a new starter and belt for the drive system. I'll never buy a Polaris again."

## Tractor-Mounted Leaf Blower

"I bought an 8 hp walk-behind leaf blower. It worked great but I had a hard time pushing it up and down the slopes of my yard," says Jim Bugg, Curran, Mich.

"So I took off the two wheels and handle, turned it around, and mounted it on back of my lawn tractor. I attached a caster wheel to the back of the unit and mounted the throttle on the fender of the tractor. The discharge on the blower is on the same side as the mower discharge. It works great and makes lawn cleanup easy."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Bugg, 3510 McCollum Lake Road, Curran, Mich. 48728.



**Jim Bugg removed the wheels and handle from his 8 hp walk-behind leaf blower, then mounted it on back of his lawn tractor. Unit rides on a caster wheel.**

## Great Gift Idea For Christmas

If you've got a hard-to-buy-for farmer or rancher on your Christmas gift list this year, why not do your shopping right here?

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