

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

buy" (Apollo Sales & Service, Bismarck, N. Dak. ph 701 255-1221). "I started using this product back in 1990 when I bought a quart to use on my corn planter. After I applied it, my neighbors told me they thought I had bought a new planter. I've used Color Back every year since then on one piece of equipment or another.

"I receive satisfaction from operating new-looking equipment, and I make money by having new-looking equipment when trade-in time rolls around. Dealers pay more for a



piece of equipment that moves off the lot quickly."

Jeff Bush, East Aurora, N.Y.: "I like my **Bend-Pak XL-9** automotive lift from Northern Tool (www.northerntool.com; ph 800 221-0516). It makes working on cars and trucks a much easier job. It's made in the U.S. and was easy on my wallet. Sells for \$2,999."

Joe Hinchman, Rochester, N.Y.: "My 2003 **Kioti CK20 HST** tractor equipped with a front-end loader and backhoe is my best buy. It's a great machine. I especially like the backhoe, which comes off in only two minutes and goes on in just five minutes without tools.

"My 1961 **Allis Chalmers B-1** garden tractor has required only routine maintenance. I still use it every week to mow our lawn. My parents bought this tractor new for \$725 equipped with electric start. When the second mower deck rusted out 15 years ago, they wanted \$900 for a new mower. Instead, I bought a good used deck for \$100 and re-built it. As long as we can get parts for this tractor, my son will be able to pass it on to his son, and he can use it, too."

Michael W. Hopkins, Hurricane, W. Va.: Michael's impressed with his 1986 **Deere 855** tractor, which he bought used with about 1,200 hours on it. "This tractor works great and never fails to start. It acts like a tractor twice its size."

Wilbur Hennigs, Oroville, Wash.: A 2001 **Subaru Forester** equipped with a manual transmission rates as Wilbur's "best buy". "We had a lot of snow last winter, but this vehicle never let us down."

Art Mangels, Dillon, Montana: "My **Dover** rotary 12,000-lb. drive-on lift is my best buy (Dover Industries, Madison, Ind. ph 800 640-5438). It works great for servicing cars and farm vehicles. Ramps can be moved



closer together for small loaders and 4-wheelers.

"The 4-post unit comes with complete installation instructions and shims for leveling when anchoring posts to a cement floor. An electric/hydraulic power unit powers a lift cylinder that's hooked to four cables encased in a frame. Each post has a safety lock. You need shop air to release the lock cylinders for lowering the unit. This drive-on lift also makes a nice temporary table. We like the

safety of this unit because we don't have to worry about falling into a pit.

"Also, we do a lot of welding and cutting and are aware that certain explosive gases can get trapped in a pit or floor drain."

On the negative side, "I have a complaint with operator manuals for tractors, combines and other equipment. Many pages are wasted on obvious items such as how to put the key in the ignition or how to operate the cigarette lighter, but then the manual leaves out important information regarding operating details and settings.

"The worst written manual I've seen is the one for Deere's 567 round baler. You have to flip back and forth between several different sections of the manual to get all the information you need, and even after that you might have to call a company service man just to figure it out."

Jerry Dannen, Chariton, Iowa: Jerry's "best buy" is the **Icynene** spray-on insulation he uses in his shop (Koopman Icynene, Pella, Iowa ph 866 321-0131). "My shop measures 60 by 30 ft. and has 10-ft. sidewalls. I use a small wood stove to heat it to over 70 degrees, even when it's 10 degrees below zero outside. I can stoke the fire at 5 p.m. and by 9 a.m. the next morning it'll still be 45 degrees inside the shop. I told my wife that if we ever build a new house, I'll use this insulation."

On the "worst buy" side, "My **Troy-Bilt** rear-tine tiller was advertised as easy to handle. Well, I weigh 215 lbs. and it just about throws my arm out of their sockets whenever this machine hits a hard spot. There's no drag stake so it lunges forward. When I call the company I always get a busy signal, which makes me feel I'm not the only one to have problems with this product. I tried selling this machine, but no one wants it."

Bill Gassel, Elkville, Ill.: "The **Deere L130** lawn mower I bought at Home Depot is my worst buy. It's equipped with a 23 hp Kohler engine and a 48-in. mower deck. It has a lot of power but it does a bad job mowing grass.

"A major problem is that Deere doesn't make regular mowing blades for it. All my dealer has to offer is mulching blades. When I mow, the deck plugs and leaves wads of material across the yard. If anyone can help, I'd appreciate hearing from them. I made the mistake of buying what I thought was a top-of-the-line product, but instead I just got a pretty green lemon."

Jerry D. Ackermann, Lakefield, Minn.: A **Phiber** double windrow inverter/merger rates as Jerry's "best buy" (Crystal City, Manitoba ph 204 873-2448). "This machine lets me invert two windrows individually, or merge two windrows together. It also fluffs the windrow which results in faster drying. We can invert up to 20 to 25 acres per hour which allows us to stay ahead of our big square baler. It's hydraulically-operated with no chains or belts to slip. A real pleasure to operate."

Guy Simpson, Mission Hill, S. Dak.: "My 1995 **Shaver HD-12** post driver is my best buy. I custom build fences for farm and ranches so this machine gets a lot of use. It has saved me a lot of time and hard work and performs well with very little maintenance. I wouldn't want to build fences without this machine."

Lynn Simonsen, Sleepy Eye, Minn.: Lynn likes his 2001 **Dodge Grand Caravan** which he bought used. It now has about 97,000 miles on it. "This is the first Dodge I've ever owned. It's powered by a 3.3-liter, V-6 gas engine which is very reliable and gets 23 mpg. There's a lot of room in this vehicle for people and for hauling stuff. It's very comfortable to drive. An excellent vehicle."

Ike Mast, Millersburg, Ohio: "My new **Caterpillar 04C** bulldozer is my worst buy. I had problems with the water pump which had a broken weld; the steering clutch wasn't upgraded by the company as it was supposed to be; the parts book wasn't upgraded; a piece of emery cloth was found in the oil pan; and the engine uses a lot of oil and tends to over-heat. The warranty service has been very poor."

Vincent and Judy Loeckle, Osage, Iowa: They say the **Oxy Blast Plus** hydrogen peroxide they use in their well water has really improved the water's taste and smell (Essential Water Solutions, Inc., Story City, Iowa ph 515 733-5053; cell 515 290-9070). "I can't believe how much better our water tastes. There's no more 'well smell'. It even makes our coffee taste better. Our sink is as white as if we had just bought a brand new one. And our T-shirts and shorts always come out white," says Vincent, who has been using the product for about 1 1/2 years.

The company sells a small \$500 injector pump to inject peroxide into the water line, but the Loeckles don't use it. Instead, once every 7 to 10 days they dump a 20-oz. pop bottle full of Oxy Blast into their well.

"Before we found Oxy Blast we spent a couple thousand dollars on a chlorinator and iron filter, which didn't help. When we read about the hydrogen peroxide injector system in FARM SHOW, we decided to try it out but without spending the money for the injector pump."

He buys the product in a 5-gal. plastic container. "We've got to be careful handling this product because it's 31 percent hydrogen peroxide. That's why the company recommends using its pump. If you accidentally spill even a little bit on your finger it will bite so you want to get it off right away. We may end up buying a pump eventually.

"A 5-gal. container sells for \$125 but lasts about one year. So we're spending about \$10 per month."

The Loeckles live on 14 acres where they grow gladiolus, pumpkins, broom corn, and other ornamental varieties. "Water treated with hydrogen peroxide even makes our plants grow better," he says. "Chlorine tablets tend to corrode a well pipe, whereas hydrogen peroxide isn't corrosive to iron."

Hydrogen peroxide doesn't eliminate iron oxide bacteria, it kills it, so a good water filter is necessary, says Loeckle. "Because the filter may not get all the dead iron bacteria out of the water, you may have to treat your water softener to keep the softener clean. I use Potassium Permanganate."

Stan Baker, Oshkosh, Neb.: Stan installed a series of **K-Line** pod-type irrigators on his pasture and he couldn't be more pleased (K-Line Irrigation North America, St. Joseph, Mich. ph 866 665-5463; www.k-line.com). The sprinklers attach to heavy duty polyethylene lines at about 50-ft. intervals. The sprinkler lines can be moved in minutes, towed by an ATV or similar vehicle, without even turning the water off.



Stan recently told *Grass Farmer* magazine that the sprinkler pods increase the amount of animals he can run on a given acreage. "What used to support the equivalent of 600 yearlings before, now can easily maintain

2,000 yearlings," he says. He installed 35 lines with a total of 410 pods on 400 acres. The entire system is fed by one 900 gpm well that's also used to supply a nearby center pivot.

He used the system last year for the first time. He says the line-pod system is more water efficient than center pivots and plans to convert two nearby center pivots to pods. The nozzles are sized from 1 to 5 gal. per minute, depending on the amount of water needed in a given time period.

Jerry Nansel, Wellington, Nevada: "My best buys are the **Meg-Mo** 4-blade mower discs I bought for my Snapper mower, which is equipped with a 38-in. deck (Meg-Mo Systems, Sterling, Ill. ph 815 625-0125; www.meg-mo.com). The blades allow me to cut at 50 percent higher speed and get a smoother cut and better distribution of clippings in my 3-bag catcher. Even at the higher speed, I have yet to plug the chute as happened frequently in the past with standard blades."

Cliff Neubauer, Fairfield, Iowa: A 2005 **Harvestmore** 725 flex head rates as Cliff's "best buy" (Young's Custom Ag Service, Spring Valley, Ill. ph 888 434-9820; www.youngscustomagservice.com). "We purchased this flex head last year after using an 820 platform, modified by the company, for three years. Last fall we used it to cut 850 acres of tough, green-stemmed beans with no problems. This head has more flex and will cut closer than any other header on the market, and the company support is just as impressive. One look at this head and you can tell that it was designed by someone who has used one for a living, as opposed to the way most things are designed these days."

John Nauerth, Lakefield, Minn.: "I'd like to inform your readers of a serious safety problem I had with my **Case IH STX** series tractor equipped with a 16-speed powershift transmission. I had just started to cross a major highway, at night, pulling a tandem disk, when the tractor died. There I was blocking two lanes of traffic, and I couldn't start the tractor to move it off the road. For all practical purposes, I was helpless. The strobe safety light shut down and the blinkers dimmed rapidly - I was lucky an accident didn't happen. Some truckers managed to stop and activate their blinkers, and the Minnesota state highway patrol assisted. It was a two-hour incident.

"The operator's manual says when you get a low battery warning a 3-second alarm will sound. The manual says this won't cause immediate damage or shut down the tractor, but that you should check out the problem at your earliest convenience.

"This is false information. When the computer senses 11 volts the icon appears on the panel, and then a transmission fault appears and the transmission shifts automatically to 'park'. Next, the engine goes to idle and then the screen goes blank. The only way you can move the tractor is to charge the batteries, or replace them with freshly charged ones so the computer will function again. It's no big deal unless you've just started across a highway like I did and become stranded.

"This incident really shook me up. I don't consider myself a complete idiot on electronics as I hold a private pilot's license. The bottom line? If you get a low battery warning when driving this tractor, check it out immediately."

Ben Hunt, Smiths Grove, Ky.: A 1986 **Shaver** 8-in. post driver that he bought used rates as Ben's "best buy". "It has really improved the quality of the fences I've put up. Using this post driver is so much easier than digging a hole and tamping it."