

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Mark LaSalle, Manning, S.C.: Mark likes his **Milwaukee** 28-volt Sawzall, impact wrench, circular saw, and drill. "All these tools have the power to handle any job. I've used them on everything from house remodeling jobs to junkyard runs. On any one day, I've never needed more than the two batteries that come with each tool."

Raymond Lafrinere, Athens, Ohio: "My 1998 **Deere** 455 garden tractor equipped with a 22 hp Yanmar diesel and 60-in. belly mower. It has more than 900 hours on it with no problems. It burns only about half as much fuel as my **Deere** 425 equipped with a 20 hp gas engine."

Francis Kryzsko, Grand Forks, N. Dak.: Francis likes his **Chomper** Simplex 14S firewood processor that's powered by a Honda 24 hp engine (Rainier Hydraulics, ph 800 457-9136; www.chomper.net). The company says it's the only 100 percent automatic firewood processor. No log lifting is required. All cutting is done with a shear blade that never needs sharpening. The processor is equipped with an adjustable splitter head that can be adjusted to split two or four ways, depending on log diameter. An 8-way splitter head is also available.



"This machine feeds the log, shears it to length, and splits it. It's a very complex machine but it's simple to operate," says Kryzsko. "A full length tree can be cut and split into firewood with just a few hydraulic lever controls. Moisture is forced from the tree as it's processed. My machine has been trouble-free with a minimum of maintenance. It's a real traffic stopper when I operate it near any public activity."

Donald Osborn, Richfield Springs, N.Y.: "The shop manual for my **Kubota** T1600H tractor is my worst buy. The manual doesn't provide any pressure information for the hydrostat transmission and no step-by-step instructions on disassembly and reassembly. I paid almost \$40 for it."

Leon W. Kenyon, Saxtons River, Vt.: "My 2007 **Mantis** rototiller is small but does a good job. It's lightweight, and it does a good job either tilling or cultivating."

Gale Goff, Chandler Heights, Arizona: Gale likes his 2008 **Sears Craftsman** 30 LED wand-type rechargeable flashlight. "It's very bright and long lasting for its small size. It provides instant emergency light for power failures and for night trips - it's 500 ft. to our mailbox - and for irrigation inspection and inspection of car and machine problems. It has a hook on one end so it can be used as an under-hood worklight."

Prause Ranch, China Spring, Texas: They like their 2002 **Ford** 350 4-door pickup equipped with a diesel engine. "It has more than 70,000 miles with no problems except for a leak in the fuel filter. It gets 16 to 17 mpg empty, and 12 mpg pulling a 16-ft. gooseneck trailer loaded with cattle. It also gets about the same mileage pulling a 31-ft. travel trailer. It has been back to the dealer only one time, for some kind of valve timing sensor. It cost about \$36,000, which used to be the price of a good home."

Tom Thompson, Franklin, Ind.: "My 1990 **Grasshopper** zero turn riding mower

equipped with a 42-in. deck is my best buy. I use it to cut my 2-acre yard. My only expense over the years has been for new tires, belts and grease, and for a new drive wheel bearing. After 18 years of use it continues to do an excellent job."

George Vonderheide, LaFarge, Wis.: "My 2004 **Polaris** 6-WD utility vehicle has great traction for going up steep and slippery hills, easily crosses rough terrain, and carries a heavy payload. It has a big 8-gal. gas tank so it can go a long time without refueling. The 6-WD isn't needed most of the time, but when it's needed it does a great job."

Albert Patterson, Taft, Tenn.: "My 2008 **Toro** Personal-Pace walk-behind lawn mower is my worst buy. It cuts good and has plenty of power, but it bags poorly if the grass is even the slightest bit damp or thick. Also, the transmission went out after only 20 hours of use. The dealer fixed it under warranty but it took two weeks. It lasted another few weeks before it hit a 1-in. stick and bent the crankshaft, and that wasn't covered by the warranty. It cost about \$200 and took two months to get it going. It still vibrates badly."

"My **Honda** HR 214 Easy Start mower is a best buy. It's at least 12 years old and must have more than 5,000 hours on it, but it still keeps on going. It smokes, and it has a home-made starter and bicycle cables in it, yet it always starts on the first pull and just won't die. It cuts and bags as good as a new model. It has hit bricks, pieces of concrete, rebar, rope and wire, but still runs smooth. It's a good, dependable mower. If Honda still made this model, we'd buy another one."

"My 1996 **New Holland** 163 rear-folding hay tedder is a best buy. We bought it last spring after our old, worn-out M&W tedder went to pieces in the field. We haven't had a bit of trouble with the new one. It pulls good behind a pickup, picks up all the hay, and is easy to maintain. It doesn't use any gear oil, only grease. And it's so quiet that I have to keep looking back to make sure it's still working. I look forward to using this machine for years to come."

Gerald H. Atkins, Westport, Oregon: Gerald's impressed with his 1992 **Kubota** B7100 tractor. "In 1996 my homestead flooded, and I used this tractor to move logs and rocks, to dig channels in 2 ft. of water and mud, and for general clean up work. It's still running strong."

John N. Shifflet, Eldon, Mo.: John likes his 1994 **Homelite** chainsaw equipped with a 16-in. bar. "I bought this little saw on sale for \$99. I used it for 10 years to cut wood during the winter, and then used it to rebuild an old log school house into a retirement home. It's still going strong."

John W. McClain, Panguitch, Utah: "I'm satisfied with my 2004 **Nortrac** (Jimma) 25 hp 4-WD diesel tractor, which I bought through the Northern Equipment catalog. The tractor came equipped with a backhoe and front-end loader. I've used it to clear land for our new home and work shop, and to dig trenches for septic, water and power lines. I've also used it as a bulldozer, trencher, hole digger, grader, wood hauler, snowplow and wood chipper. It does more than I could ever expect and uses only about one gallon of fuel per hour. It has 520 hours on it but has never failed to start."

Jeffrey Campbell, Mossleigh, Alberta: "My 2006 **Case IH** MXU130 tractor is as noisy as the old I175 model we used 25 years ago. The air conditioning hasn't worked properly for more than 15 months. The steering doesn't work consistently, and the motor has a small oil leak. My next tractor will be a made-in-Canada tractor - a **Buhler** Versatile."

Robert C. Thurner, Hebron, Ind.: "The



Photo shows damaged gravity box loaded onto a trailer.

Gravity Box Turns From "Best Buy" To "Worst"

What had been a "best buy" 1994 Killbros 385 gravity box, suddenly became a "worst buy" for John Mills of Howell, Mich.

"It happened when the right front spindle on the box's 12-ton gear broke off. Both the box and gear were destroyed," says Mills. "Three Killbros dealers acknowledged they had heard stories about spindles breaking on 12-ton gears. One dealer said he no longer sells the 12-ton gear, opting instead for the 13-ton gear."

"I contacted Killbros and spoke to a district manager. To my surprise, he acknowledged that 'a small percentage' of the 12-ton gears will break a front spindle. There's no program to compensate anyone who has sustained the loss, no notification to customers or dealers, and the company doesn't intend to make any design changes."

"I asked my attorney to get involved. He



Broken gravity box spindle.

was able to speak to a vice president and, after a couple days of research, the vice president reported to my attorney that there's not now, nor has there ever been, a problem with spindles on the 12-ton gear."

"Well, I know of at least one - mine!"

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Mills, 1750 Oak Grove Road, Howell, Mich. 48855 (ph 517 546-5622).

Generac generator that I use on my motorhome is my worst buy. It's hard to start and won't shut off properly. I get quite disgusted when it doesn't run because it happens when there isn't any electricity to plug into. I've had it worked on several times, but with no results."

Robert Mercer, Stanton, Neb.: "Over the years I've cut a lot of wood, but this is by far the best chainsaw I've ever used," says Robert, pleased with his **Stihl** Boss 029 model. "Nothing compares to the speed and ruggedness of a Stihl."

Albert W. Riess, Brandywine, Md.: "My all-time best buy is my 1991 **Deere** A.M.T. 626 utility vehicle, which the company has since replaced with the Gator. It has been trouble-free. I have bad knees, and this machine has saved me a lot of steps."

Wilmer Dufresne, Forest Lake, Minn.: "In 2000 we bought a used **Honda** 3-in. water pump, and it's an amazing machine. It ran almost continuously for four years, except during the winter. It's not used as much any more, but still gets used quite a bit. During a heavy rain storm a few years ago the pump ended up in about 4 ft. of water. We changed the oil, dried it out, pulled the recoil, and it started right up."

Michael Gorga, Galway, N.Y.: "My **Bolens** Iseki 212 garden tractor is about 25 years old but still runs like a top. I use it to pull a 4-ft. rototiller and to operate a 5-ft. mower. It runs like a dream and always starts right up, even in winter. It has plenty of power and uses less than a half gallon of fuel per hour running at full load."

Al Schollenberger, Egg Harbor, N.J.: AI's had good luck with his 2008 **Sears Craftsman** 17 1/2 hp garden tractor. "I had used it for only 1 1/2 hours before the blade hit something and a mandrel broke. A company technician came right out and repaired

it for free under warranty."

Joe Pozsgal, Capac, Mich.: "My best buy is my 1995 **Dodge** 4-WD diesel pickup. It has more than 325,000 miles on it, yet I still drive it every day."

Ben Koch, Kersey, Penn.: A 2005 **Dodge** 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a 5.7-liter Hemi engine rates as Ben's "best buy". "We've put about 1,200 miles on it, much of the time pulling a horse trailer, with no problems. This is the first time I've owned a vehicle equipped with a Hemi engine and I'm impressed. It gets 16 mpg on trips and has a lot of power. The pickup has a roomy cab and the ride is good for a heavy duty vehicle. My wife drives it and likes it, too."

"My **Poulan** string weed trimmer is my worst buy. It's hard to start even after it has been warmed up, and the string head always seems to feed either too much or too little string. It's frustrating to use."

"Back in 1959 my grandfather bought an **International** **Harvester** 330 utility tractor equipped with a **Wagner** front-end loader. It's still in use on our farm today. It has had one engine overhaul but is still on the original clutch. I don't know exactly how many hours it has, but I'm sure it's more than 10,000. I still use this tractor almost every day, and I still have the original operator manuals and sales slip."

Norm Pounder, Milford, Ill.: "From day one, our **Guardian** automatic standby generator was hard to start and ran rough. Before it was a year old it refused to run, and a hole in one of the pistons had to be repaired. Two months later during a storm it ran for about five hours before it stopped producing electricity. The dealer picked it up, and since then about two months have passed but the dealer still has it. The manufacturer and dealer are arguing as to who's at fault. Meanwhile, I've been offered a 'rebuilt' model even