

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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more than 250,000 miles with no problems.”

Roger Lee, Parsons, Kansas: “I’m impressed with my **Bosch** router and guide kit. I use it on our ranch-style house which was built in the early 1950’s, which like all older homes requires ongoing maintenance. The windowsills on some windows were rotting on the outside edge so I used the router to rebuild about 4 in. of the outside edge. Now I’m in the process of rebuilding the wooden doors on a garage that I built in 1978. I paid \$219 for it at Lowe’s. It’s a great tool.”

“On the garage door joints I’m using a **beadlock** kit that works well (www.beadlock.com).

“My **Sears** 42-in. riding mower cuts uneven and is my worst buy. After I’m done mowing the lawn looks like I gave it a bad haircut. The company offers a wheel leveling option that attaches outside the mower deck to keep the mower level. But why should I have to purchase a leveling option on a new mower?”

Karl P. Retzlaff, Morris, Minn.: Karl’s got a “beef” with cordless tools. “Why are replacement batteries for these tools so expensive and so hard to find? When the batteries on Coleman and Sears Craftsman tools wear out, you can no longer use the tools. **Makita** cordless tools work better. I haven’t tried Milwaukee or DeWalt cordless tools. I’m running out of room to store my useless Craftsman and Coleman cordless tools.”

“I bought a 5-ft. **Rhino** brush mower to replace my 3-pt. mounted Woods belt-drive brush mower. The shear pin breaks if the mower barely touches the ground, and the pto shaft rattles terribly if I turn just a little. Finally I parked this mower in the trees and started using the old Woods mower again. The Woods mower has been a real time saver and is built well. I’d buy another one.”

Carl Smith, Hopewell, Va.: “My 2007 **Bolen** riding mower is my worst buy. The deck is falling apart, the engine runs a while and then cuts off, it lacks power, rides rough, and is hard to steer. I was given a **Murray** riding mower in 1992 that is still running strong. I gave it to my neighbor last year when I bought the Bolen model, which was a big mistake. I should have spent the money on another Murray.”

Casey Schrock, Elkhart, Iowa: Carl’s happy with **Sea Foam** motor treatment (Sea Foam Sales Co., ph 952 938-4811; www.seafoamsales.com). “I got an unbelievable deal on a Honda motorcycle. It had been sitting in a barn for two years and refused to start because of gunk in the carburetors. The previous owner had tried everything short of pulling the carburetors off and rebuilding them, but nothing would clean them. I put a small auxiliary tank on the motorcycle and ran a 50 percent mixture of Sea Foam through the carburetors. At first the engine would barely run at full choke so I let it sit for a day to work its magic. When I started the engine the second day it would run with the choke off. I rode it for a half hour and it idled smooth as can be. Now the engine starts right up every time. It saved me the time, money and hassle of rebuilding the carburetors.”

Dana White, Normantown, W. Va.: “My 2006 **Kawasaki** Mule utility vehicle is my best buy. It hasn’t kicked me yet. It’s really handy to haul stuff.”

K. George Van Every, Page, Neb.: “I’m well pleased with my **Tool Shop** 10-in. sliding compound miter saw. It was the best \$100 I’ve ever spent. I don’t use it that much but for a cheap saw it works great when I need it. I used it to remodel my dad’s house with no problems.”

Delmar Butler, Chandler, Okla.: “My

1977 **Stihl** chainsaw still starts and runs great.

I’ve replaced the bar and several chains, but it has required no other repairs.

“My 2006 **Ford** F-250 pickup equipped with a Power Stroke engine is my worst buy. It gets poor mileage, and the cooling fan roars at low temperatures. Also, so much mud builds up around the doors that I can’t get in or out without getting dirty.”

“My 2006 **Ford** Expedition is a worst buy. By the time it had 23,000 miles I had already replaced all the tires. It rattles, and dirt around the rear door gasket causes leaks.”

Quentin Raddotz, Belle Plaine, Minn.: “We’ve driven **Ford** Ranger pickups since 1993 including 1990, 1999, and 2003 models. We bought two of the pickups used and one new. They’ve had very few problems and are easy on fuel.”

Ralph R. Look, Wichita, Kansas: “The **Wayne** sump pump I bought in 1995 is my worst buy. It sat in the box for a year before it was put to use, so I didn’t feel that I could return it.”

“The first problem was with a float that slides up and down on a brass rod and would move up to turn the pump on. As the water was pumped out, the weight of the rod was enough to cause it to follow the float down and turn the pump off early, rather than let the float move down to the bottom of the rod and then turn the pump off. As a result, the pump cycled on and off much too often.”

“I contacted the company and was told they’d check it out and get back to me, but they didn’t. I fixed the problem by adding a small spring above the pump to help offset the weight of the rod, and it worked. Recently, I caught the sump nearly full because the pump had failed to turn on. It appears the rubber seal on the float switch had aged and taken a set and the weight of the float wasn’t enough to pull the switch down to the ‘on’ position.”

“Otherwise, this pump has worked well. But if I hadn’t checked and found the sump full, I would’ve had wet carpet. Based on my experience, I wouldn’t buy another Wayne sump pump.”

Mary A. Bowlin, Cuervo, New Mexico: Mary says **Zims** crack cream is her “best buy” (Perfecta Products, Inc., ph 800 319-2225 or 330 549-1900; www.crackcream.com). “My husband has had painful cracks

“My husband has had painful cracks on his fingers for years. This cream cleared them up.”

on the end of his fingers for years, but this cream cleared them up. Now he has no more pain.”

John Giardina, Cayuga, N.Y.: “In April, 2007, I ordered 10 **Empress** high-growth trees from **Wonder Earth Partners**, sending a check for \$152.75. I received a note saying they were sold out and that the trees would ship in the fall. About mid-September I got a small cardboard box with 10 sets of roots that didn’t look good. We planted them anyway into prepared ground as per instructions. Not one of the trees came up in the spring. After repeated calls to the company, we have not been able to get a refund, or even a response, even though the trees were 100 percent guaranteed.”

Jack Kaspari, Bovey, Minn.: Jack’s pleased with the aftermarket engine heater he installed in his 2005 Volkswagen Jetta die-

Bale Band-It bunching machine is pulled behind a small square baler, grouping 21 bales together in a single block.



“Best Buy” Bale Band-It

Vince Heyer, Milan, Ill., grows 400 acres of hay and has good things to say about his baling machine called the Bale Band-It.

It’s pulled behind a small square baler and is designed to group 21 bales together. The machine automatically wraps the bales tightly with steel bands and then ejects the bundle on-the-go.

Only the seven bales at the bottom of the bundle ever touch the ground, and then only for a short time until they’re picked up. Once baled, most of the hay never sees sunshine again. The Heyers’ transport much of their hay to Florida where it’s marketed to very fussy buyers who raise horses.

Heyer produces alfalfa, orchard grass, timothy, and mixed hay. As to the alfalfa, he says it produces a lot of dust when it’s baled, loaded, or stacked by hand. “That dust is really produced by leaves falling off, which means lost nutrition. We want to retain those leaves. The Bale Band-It allows us to do that.

sel. He bought it from **Frost Heaters Inc.** (612-978-9565; www.frostheater.com). “My dealer told me there was no such heater but I found this one and it’s very well made and compact. It heats engine coolant to provide quick starts on cold northern Minnesota mornings. These custom heaters fit Golfs, Jettas, Beetles and Passats with TDI diesels. You can’t use frost plug heaters on these engines.”

Paul J. Miller, New Richland, Minn.: “I read two ‘worst buy’ reports in a recent issue of **FARM SHOW** on the **Bixby** corn/pellet stove. I suspect those gentlemen did not have their stoves properly adjusted because I have used a Bixby stove to heat my house for three years. It’s very efficient and low maintenance. Definitely performs as advertised. We’re very pleased.”



David Kluth, Menomonee Falls, Wis.: “I love my **Thermobile** AT 307 waste oil heater (ph 262 882-4203; www.thermobile.us). It produces 100,000 btu’s of portable heat for my shop. It’s easy to install using \$150 worth of class B double wall chimney pipe. I liked it so much that I became a dealer.”



Machine wraps groups of bales tightly with steel bands and then ejects the bundle on-the-go.

It moves bales quickly from field to storage and gets them out of the sunlight,” says Heyer.

Contact: **FARM SHOW** Followup, GFC, 34273 210th Ave., Pittsfield, Ill. 62363 (ph 866 296-3717 or 217 285-6487; www.balebandit.com).

Chris Reinke, Morrison, Tenn.: Chris likes his **New Holland** 570 small square baler. “I bought it when I had to replace an old Massey baler. Talk about a difference - the New Holland is a lot bigger yet it doesn’t even seem like I’m pulling a baler because it runs so smooth and quiet.”

Richard Thomas, Madison, Mo.: Richard nominates his 2006 **Valtra** C-90 tractor as his “best buy”. “This tractor is a state-of-the-art 90 hp tractor - shuttle shift transmission with 24 speeds forward and reverse; joystick hydraulic controls mounted on the fender for outside override of the 3-pt. hitch; a heavy-built front-end loader; and non-directional, all-wheel-drive tires. The tractor always starts when it’s cold outside without having to be plugged in, and it uses less than two gallons of diesel per hour. I grow hay and feed cattle so I use this tractor all year long.”

Dennis Huwe, Bagley, Minn.: “My 2006 **Polaris** Ranger is my best buy. I’ve owned six different Polaris ATV’s and all of them have been trouble-free.

“My **Tracfone** cell phone is my worst buy. When we went to Arizona last winter it took two different phones, three weeks, and many hours of my time to get it working properly. I finally switched to an **Alltel** cell phone, which has been trouble-free everywhere I go.”

Ron Schroeder, Wever, Iowa: Ron’s pleased with **DeWalt** 18-volt cordless tools. “I’m a contractor so I really work these tools hard. I’ve never had to replace brushes or switches. The batteries wear out in time, but the tools perform perfectly.”

Joe Konwinski, Silver Creek, Neb.: “My 2007 **Jonserud** chainsaw equipped with an 18-in. bar is my best buy. It’s easy to start, well balanced, has a lot of power, and is lightweight.”