

## BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

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**Bill Hardwick, Gainsville, Texas:** Bill bumped the mileage on his 2007 Dodge 1-ton pickup from 13 mpg to 17.3 by making two changes to the truck. “It has a Duramax 5.9 diesel, which is a great engine, so I figure I’ll be driving the truck for at least 10 years. I decided I could justify spending some money to bump up the mileage. The first thing I did was to swap out the ring and pinion gear in the rear end, going from a 4.10 ratio to 3:42 (www.ringpinion.biz; 866 349-6801). It cost about \$800 to do and added about 2 mpg to the mileage. The slight drop in power is not noticeable, even when hauling big loads.

“The second thing I did was to install a Bully Dog electronic power boost unit for about \$650 (www.bullydog.com; ph 866-285-5936). It boosted the truck’s mileage up to 17.3 mpg and the truck has more power than before. I had a professional shop install the ring and pinion but I installed the Bully Dog unit myself. These products are well worth it if you’ve got a good truck you’re going to have for awhile.”

**Bruce Madison, Barronett, Wis.:** “I bought a waste oil furnace unit from **Harold Ag & Mobile Products** (www.heco.net; 800

so to install with no holes drilled. But it actually took four hours and I had to drill holes in the firewall. When I called them back, they said ‘Oh, except for that model’ referring to my Duramax.

“Once installed, the unit didn’t work. On the highway, it limited the truck to 60 mph. I couldn’t go any faster. The company said they had a risk-free warranty but they charged me a 10 percent restocking fee plus shipping. So it cost \$100 to return a product that didn’t work. In addition, the company was not easy to deal with. Another problem was they told me it wouldn’t void the warranty but said I should take it out before taking the truck in for service. If it doesn’t affect the warranty, why do I have to spend hours taking it off and putting it back on?”

“The Banks and Edge power modules that I installed in my Ford F-350 diesels both work great. They took minutes to install and instantly boosted power by 80 hp, although they use about 2 mpg more. But we tow big hay trailers and other equipment and need the power. The only problem I had with the Banks unit was that when a technician at the dealer put a diagnostic unit on the truck, it wiped out the memory and I had to send it back in for repairs.

“I tried the Workhorse because I’m always looking for something better. I was disappointed in both the product and company service.”

**Glee Reed, Wakarusa, Kansas:** “My 2006 **Stihl MS 250** chainsaw handles easy and is my best buy.”

**Jim Ruen, Lanesboro, Minn.:** “I’m sold on the **CargoBuckle** retractable ratchet tie-downs from IMMI (ph 888 937-4626). I picked up two sets at the Green Expo in Louisville, Ky. last fall and bolted them down on

# Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

## OPINION

**Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy**  
Send your nominations to:  
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,  
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use  
the survey form on our website at  
www.FARMSHOW.com,  
or E-mail your comments to:  
Editor@FARMSHOW.com**

541-8910). They sell the guts of the stove and you supply the barrel and flue pipe. This unit is amazing. Burns clean and hot. People ask if I’m heating my shop because there’s no smoke coming out the chimney. I burn my own oil and oil from neighbors. I just bought another waste oil unit that I plan to put into an old oil furnace I got from a neighbor.”

**Jeff Weller, Dunnellon, Fla.:** “We’ve bought many items for our farm that we first read about in FARM SHOW. Many have worked out great. But one of our worst buys ever was the pasture vacuum for sucking up horse manure that was featured in Vol. 31, No. 3, made by **Greystone USA** in Las Vegas. It’s poorly made with numerous design flaws. For example, the trailer coupler was assembled backward. The tilt mechanism wouldn’t align properly with the frame. The machine has a horrid squeal. Turned out there was no grease in the bearings. This in a machine that cost \$4,000!

“We had many more problems with the unit, including replacement of three motors in the few months we owned it. We finally contacted the distributor, who took it back with a 25 percent ‘restocking’ charge even though it came back with a ‘money back guarantee’. I complained to the president of the company and he returned the 25 percent fee. They had a bad motor in early units.”

**Manuel Lima, Venita, Okla.:** “I bought a Workhorse ‘power chip’ from **Southcoast Performance Solutions** after reading about it in FARM SHOW. I wanted to install it in my 2007 Duramax diesel. I had already installed performance-boosting modules from Banks and Edge in my two Ford F-350 pickups.

“Before buying the Workhorse for \$695, I talked to tech people at the company. They assured me it would take just 10 minutes or



my ATV trailer. They work great. No more hassle with getting the strap wound in just right on tie-downs or worrying about how secure I have them anchored. And I don’t have to go looking when I need a tie-down, nor do I have to worry about having it fly off in transit.

“I just drive my ATV onto the trailer, pull out the strap, hook it to the ATV and ratchet it down. Release is even easier. The belt retracts automatically.

“Each pair has a 5,000-lb. break strength (stainless steel models have 3,000-lb. limits). The heavy-duty web strap has a 55-in. reach. They sell for \$59 a pair.”

**Ron Butler, Morning Sun, Iowa:** Ron likes his 2000 **Deere 455** riding mower. “These mowers are tough and built to last. No problems. The diesel engine has plenty of power and is easy on fuel. Also, the deck is built rugged. I wouldn’t even look at another brand.”

**Marveggio Farm, Colcord, Okla.:** They’re impressed with their **Case IH 1200** 12-row pivot planter, which they used to plant 300 acres of edible green beans. “This planter plants accurately - even in rocks the crop came up two to three days earlier than it did with our previous planter. The field men couldn’t believe how evenly spaced the seed was and how good the crop looked after it came up. It has an easy-to-use computer - everything is done from the cab and it’s all in English, with no photos. The population counter lets you know the average seed population for every row. We can’t believe how much time and labor this planter saves per