

**David V. Vimont, Shelton, Wash.:** "For many years we've had good luck with our 1988 **Deere** Gator AMT 600, 1990 **Kubota** B7100 loader tractor, and 2004 **Bombardier** 4-wheeler."

**Dan Fitzsimmons, Good Thunder, Minn.:** "I like the **Sensor I** seed population monitor that I use on my White 5100 8-row planter (ph 800 736-7671; www.sensor-1.com). It's designed to monitor seed population and flow and was easy to install and program. I bought it with an optional GPS speed sensor that results in accurate seed spacing and population."

**Philip Melanson, Holyoke, Mass.:** "I like **O'Keefe Working Hands** skin moisturizer (ph 800 382-8473; www.okeeffecompany.com). We have harsh weather so my hands take a beating, with frequent cracks and splits. This is the best product I've seen to take care of the problem."

**Glenn R. Hawley, Bellingham, Wash.:** "I was impressed with my 1999 **Hitachi** 12-volt cordless drill that I bought at Hardware Sales. I eventually gave it to a friend and upgraded to an 18-volt cordless model, which I use every day. It has never failed me. Of all the tools and equipment I've used over the years, this one is the best (ph 360 734-6140; www.hardware-sales.net)."

**Dale A. Cummins, Chattaroy, Wash.:** Dale nominates his 1992 **Ford F-250** 4-WD pickup equipped with a 7.0-liter engine as his "best buy". "It has more than 201,000 miles and has required only routine maintenance. I have the truck set up for towing with a hideaway gooseneck, fifth wheel hitch, and bumper hitch. This pickup never fails to do the job."

**Andy Anderson, Laramie, Wyo.:** A 2001 **New Holland L170** skid loader rates as Andy's "best buy". "I bought this skid loader used with 1,508 hours and have several attachments for it, including a snowblower, post hole digger, forks and hay spear. No problems, and it always starts right up. I'm well pleased with it."

**John Shelton, McLeod, Texas:** John's the proud owner of a 2007 **Can-Am** Outlander 500 Max XT ATV. "I use this ATV while checking pipelines and natural gas distribution systems. I put 2,000 to 3,000 miles per year on it, driving at slow speeds while carrying expensive equipment with me. Over the years I've owned many different types of ATVs, but this one is by far the best. It's light and agile and rides great, which I really appreciate after putting in a 10-hour day. No problems so far. Also, it can pull heavy loads."

"My 2009 **Taurus** "Judge" pistol shoots 45-caliber slugs and 410 shotgun shells. It's a worst buy. I've bought two Taurus-made guns, and both had to be returned to the company for replacement. It took five months to get a replacement for the first model, a 45LC Thunderbolt rifle, and now my Judge has been gone three months but I still haven't heard anything from the factory. I'll never buy a Taurus firearm again."

**Stephen Stone, Midland, Mich.:** "My 2009 **Troy-Bilt** rototiller is my worst buy. I was able to operate it for only about an hour before it stopped. A plastic filter at the bottom of the engine is supposed to let air into the gas tank, but it doesn't work. I had it changed, but I was able to run the machine for only about two hours before the same problem happened again."

**Douglas DeVall, Ellicott City, Md.:** "I like my **DeWalt** cordless tools which include an 18-volt drill, circular saw, and reciprocating saw. All these tools are tough, durable, and reliable. The batteries and charger allow

me to work through a variety of building projects."

**Jeff Fox, Dacula, Ga.:** "I use zip lock ties to secure 2-ft. lengths of 2-in. dia. pvc pipe vertically against the back screen of my **Kawasaki** Mule utility vehicle. Then I put the handles of my tools inside the pipes. That way the tools stick up in the air instead of taking up space in the Mule's bed."

**Jack H. Leslie, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta:** A 1999 **Stihl** 440 chainsaw, equipped with a 70 cc engine and 20-in. bar, rates as Jack's "best buy". "It's an excellent cutting machine and just won't die."

"I own three different zero turn riding mowers including a **Honda** 12 hp model, a **Stiga** 17 hp model, and a **Cub Cadet** 19 hp model. They all work good. But my beef with most of the riding mowers on the market is the way the underside of the decks are built. There are too many bolts, bolt heads, and nuts for grass to catch on, and that causes the deck to build up with grass. There has to be a better way."

**Ric Brooks, Clatskanie, Ore.:** "I just bought my third **Kubota** tractor, an L5240 model equipped with a turbocharged diesel engine. I've owned Kubota tractors for 11 years and have never had one in the shop. These tractors are easy to service and comfortable to operate. My L5240 model operates all my haying equipment with ease and uses little fuel. The turbocharged diesel engine has a lot of power, too."

**George Peltier, Menomonie, Wis.:** A rust remover called **Rustbeeter** rates as George's "worst buy". "This product gets moldy, smelly, and works slowly. It has a mud-like consistency that makes it difficult to check progress. I recommend buying a bottle of acid at a farm supply store and diluting it down instead of messing with this sugarbeet byproduct."

**Burdette Boers, Peru, Ill.:** "My 2009 **Westendorf** Brush Grabber is my worst buy. I called the company and they sent me a detailed dimension sheet to fill out, which I did. However, the machine they delivered was different than what I had filled out on the dimension sheet. I called the company to complain but got no response. I made some shims and got the unit to work somewhat. However, it took a lot of time."

**Ernie Jones, Laurenceburg, Tenn.:** "My 2005 **Penta** 4110 feed mixer wagon is my best buy (ph 888 844-7788; www.farmnet-services.com). I use this wagon to mix three loads of feed every day. No problems."

**Marvin Labecki, Rhinelander, Wis.:** "I use my **D&R** Power Grader on a 3/4-mile road that we maintain. The grader helps take out rough areas with no problems. When I did break a wheel mount, the problem was fixed right away with no charge for shipping. I'm well pleased with this grader."

**Hubert Bailey, Garden Valley, Idaho:** "My 2000 **Kawasaki** Prairie 300 ATV always starts and has been trouble-free. I've had to replace only two front tires and a drive belt."

**Mike Stark, Hixton, Wis.:** "I've had good luck with my 2008 **Case** 430 skid loader. It's equipped with a Cummins engine which I really like. This machine will do any chore I need it for. The induction for the skid loader's heater was relocated so it doesn't interfere with getting the machine into my barn. I added two side lights which really improved the lighting. The machine's side windows are protected so if I have to work in brush I don't have to worry about breaking them."

"The **S.I.** Precision Belt Meters I bought for my Great Plains 15-ft. bean drill are my worst buy. These belt meters are supposed

## "Best Buy" Sawmill Made Even Better

The new **Lumber Smith** Portable Sawmill was just what **Kenny Bowman** had been looking for. "The price was right and it was sized for what I wanted to do," he says. "I had been looking for a sawmill half way between a chainsaw mill and a **Wood-Mizer** type bandsaw mill."

The **Lumber Smith** weighs only 105 lbs., including the 5 1/2 hp **Honda** that drives it. A three-wheeled carriage rolls on a track that **Bowman** made himself. It can cut boards as thin as 1/4 in. The 93 1/4-in. blade has a maximum capacity of a 24-in. log, plenty big enough for **Bowman's** immediate goal of producing 6 by 6-in. timbers for a post and beam building. Six months of use has confirmed his decision.

"I've worked it hard and am satisfied with the sawmill," says **Bowman**. "The company has been wonderful about troubleshooting. They also share problems that other owners have had and how to fix them. Lots of companies won't talk about things that don't work, but if **Lumber Smith** finds something that works better, they share it."

Once he had the sawmill operating, **Bowman** started working on how he would use it. Designed for carrying into the woods, the company provides plans for tracks the saw can run on. They suggest tracks be 3 to 4 ft. longer than the log to be cut.

**Bowman** wanted to set up a stationary unit that could handle larger logs that he would bring to the saw. When his employer gave him a roller/conveyor track, he made adjustable stops to hold the logs in place.

A set of stops at the end of the conveyor are simple brackets fixed to the side rails. Long bolts with the ends sharpened turn through the brackets to anchor the log end.

Getting a log to the conveyor is made easier with two other homemade devices. One is a carrier plate designed for a 3-pt. hitch. **Bowman** backs up to the middle of a log to be moved, slides the plate underneath, and lifts. For short distances, he doesn't even need to secure the log. Using the carrier he is able to position the log with one end on the conveyor. He then uses a log caddy to move the log forward and down the conveyor length.

"The caddy is simply two wheels with a length of pipe between them," explains **Bowman**. "To help hold the log in place and away from the wheels, I welded a section of 12-in. channel iron to sleeves on the pipe."

The carrier, caddy and conveyor make it easy for **Bowman** to handle his large logs, sawn beams and boards.

"Most of my logs are 22 to 24 ft. long and 15 to 16 in. in diameter," says **Bowman**. "I don't get a lot of excess when I cut



**Lumber Smith** Portable Sawmill weighs only 105 lbs., including the 5 1/2 hp **Honda** engine that drives it.



**Bowman** made this 3-pt. mounted carrier to carry larger logs to saw. Adjustable stops hold logs in place.



Home-built log caddy is used to move log forward and down the conveyor's length.

out a 6 by 6 beam, but whatever is excess is just icing on the cake. I may get four to six 1-in. boards."

The sawmill cost **Bowman** \$2,100 (with lift assembly; \$1,950 without). His add-ons were dirt cheap. His employer let him have the unwanted conveyor. A neighbor who deals in tires gave him the wheels, and most everything else came out of the scrap pile.

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to be a big improvement over fluted meters but they don't work good. I paid more than \$1,000 for them but have used them on only about 400 acres of beans. All the belts had to be replaced at my cost. The problem is that the plastic bearing-type guides don't rotate, no matter how much graphite goes through the planter. Eventually the belt cage breaks off and then that row quits planting. The company should've used steel bearings instead of plastic ones. Also, it's hard to get these belt meters to plant the correct amount of seed. Customer service has been terrible."

**Marvin Jorgensen, Maquoketa, Iowa:** "My 1999 **Deere** LX255 tractor is my best buy. Over the years I've had to replace just one belt and the blades. I use a snowblower

with it which has also been trouble-free."

**Rick Sheehan, Collierville, Tenn.:** "It's a great tool for grinding, buffing, sharpening, and so forth," says **Rick** about his **Dremel** Multi Pro tool. "Don't let this tool's size fool you. I bought the lawn mower blade sharpening kit three years ago and haven't used my bench grinder since. I recently bought a chainsaw sharpening attachment for it. It took me only 20 minutes to sharpen a chainsaw blade from a 14-in. saw, even though I had never sharpened a saw blade before. It works great. Stay with **Dremel's** accessories—the knock-off won't hold up."

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