

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

freight charges. I bought another one, but it lasted only one season before it quit working. The service shop is somewhere back east.”

James Buckman, Charlotte Hall, Md.: “I like my 2010 **Troy-Bilt** Mustang zero turn riding mower equipped with a Kohler 22 hp, V-twin engine and 50-in. deck. It’s comfortable and handles like a dream, and it starts easy. The safety features on it are just right, and it’s easy to maintain.”

He isn’t happy with his 2005 **Rockwood** travel trailer. “I’ve tried everything to keep the roof from leaking, but the only thing that works is to park the trailer on a tilt. The bathroom has no leg room, and the floor plan is poor.”

Wayne Gadow, Colville, Wash.: “I use my 2010 **Arctic Cat** 366 ATV to plow snow off my 1/4-mile driveway. It works a lot faster than my Branson 3510 tractor, although that has been a great small farm tractor. The Arctic Cat has a lot of power and traction so I haven’t had to use tire chains. This machine purrs like a kitten in the dairy section of a grocery store.”

James Bailey, Bridgeport, N.Y.: “My 1974 **Cub Cadet** riding mower still has the original engine and deck. It has gone through 3 sets of blades but still uses the same bearings. I wash it every time I use it and also grease it regularly.”

Denny Steckelberg, Coillette, Wyo.: “I love my 2002 **JCB** 1110 skid loader. It’s equipped with a side access door which makes it easy to get in and out of the cab, and is handy if you need to get out with the bucket raised a little. It’s powered by an 82 hp turbocharged Perkins engine, which works great. I never run out of power, just traction sometimes. No mechanical problems. Great machine.”

Lee L’Heureux, Aztec, N. Mex.: A 2011 **Kubota** L3200 4-WD tractor rates as Lee’s “best buy”. “I had some Russian olive trees on my place that needed to be removed. The Kubota outworked my Massey Ferguson 65 tractor in lifting and pulling the trees out of the ground. Some of the credit goes to the 4-WD.”

“They tell me the problem is due to carbon buildup, and that I should drive the pickup up and down a steep hill at 80 mph.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his 2008 **Dodge** 2300 2-WD pickup. “When I’m driving and have to take my foot off the gas pedal and then step on it again, the vehicle shutters and jerks. I’ve been to the dealer 8 or 10 times. They tell me the problem is due to carbon buildup, and that I should drive the pickup up and down a steep hill at 80 mph to blow the soot out. There has to be a better way.”

Otto L. Holley, Blanchard, Okla.: “I like my 2008 **Bad Boy** zero turn riding mower powered by a 26 hp Briggs & Stratton engine. It has a good, heavy steel deck that’s stronger than the decks on most bush hog mowers. It doesn’t have a lot of extras and everything on it is easily accessible. I really like the Briggs & Stratton engine.”

Jeff Howard, Malta, Mont.: “My 2011 **Deere** D110 riding mower runs fine and does a great job cutting my lawn.

“The pipe threaders I bought at **Northern Tools** are my worst buy. I needed a cheap set of pipe threaders to keep in my truck for repairs around the ranch. I really wasn’t expecting too much. However, the 1-in. die

chipped on the first use and the 1 1/4 and 2-in. dies left very rough threads. I should have spent more and bought Rigid pipe threaders.”

Henry Ross, Nampa, Idaho: “I like my 2010 **Dodge** 3500 diesel pickup equipped with an automatic transmission. The company has made 2 recalls on it, which the dealer took care of promptly.”

James Keiper, Little Falls, Wyo.: “It’s the simplest, best-built baler I’ve ever used,” says James about his 2004 **Challenger** RB45 round baler. “Everything on it is made in the U.S., and there are no bells or whistles—just quality construction. No problems. We’ll buy another if this one ever wears out.”

Joseph E. Bruggeman, Taberg, N.Y.: Joseph likes the 6 1/2 hp OHV horizontal shaft motor on his **Harbor Freight** wood splitter, for which he paid \$99.99 plus tax. “I can start the motor with no more than 2 pulls and it’ll run all day on 1 1/2 to 2 tanks of gas, depending on how fast I set the throttle. I increase the engine rpm’s on bigger blocks of wood, but normally 3/4 throttle is all it needs.

“I’m not happy with the **Red Wing** insulated logger boots I bought 3 1/2 years ago. I’ve worn Red Wing logger boots for 30 years, but the last 2 pairs were bad. The laces lasted only 2 to 3 months and then I had to go back to buy more. The shoe’s eyelets chew the laces up. The boots cost more than \$200 a pair, which I think is too much. I recently bought a pair of Carolina logger boots at a discount for only \$85.”

Francis E. Hanna, Lowville, N.Y.: “The **Wenz** range shift kit we bought for our Case IH 886 tractor 4 years ago makes the tractor shift easier and with more precision (ph 800 808-7885; www.ihdisgusted.com). We bought the kit because the tractor wouldn’t shift into the right gear or would lock up, which made it dangerous to use, especially in park and reverse. This kit corrected those problems and we’re well pleased with it. I’d recommend it to any 86 series tractor owner.”

Vincent Smith, Trout Creek, Mont.: Vincent’s disappointed with his 16-ft. **Haulmark** enclosed trailer. “The spring shackles were positioned opposite on each axle, and as a result only one axle supported the trailer’s weight. The electric brake tabs were bent up against the backing plates, so only the axle without weight on it had brakes. Another problem was the roof construction—at least 28 different screws missed the roof’s support beams. A very poorly built trailer.”

Kenneth Bedell, Naselle, Wash.: “My 1953 **Ferguson** TO-30 tractor is still in original condition and is my best buy. I inherited this tractor along with a Bush Hog mower and use it to maintain my property and to mow fields for my neighbors. It still runs great and is fuel efficient. It’s almost 60 years old, yet it always starts right up and does whatever I ask it to do.”

Rupert Theuerer, Spring Valley, Sask.: “I had good luck with a 1981 **White** 2-135 tractor I bought used in 2000, so when a neighbor sold his farm 3 years ago I bought his **White** 2-155 with about 8,000 hrs. on it. I use this tractor mostly to pull a 1,500-gal., 120-ft. field sprayer up and down our hilly fields at speeds up to 9 mph. I can easily spray 100 acres per hour. Both tractors have required only routine maintenance.

“My **Sears Craftsman** tools are worst buys. This company used to build fair value tools, but not any more. For example, their punches break easily. I no longer buy from them and instead buy professional tools. They cost more up front, but they last.”

Gilbert Carter, Belgrade, Mont.: Gilbert’s disappointed with his 2011 **Dandelion Dobber** that’s designed to apply weed killer to dandelions. “It’s supposed to



Hoe Clamp moves as bucket moves. Lund says it’s easier to use than a “hydraulic thumb”.

“Best Buy” Backhoe Attachment

“My 2002 **Amulet** Hoe Clamp is one of my best buys ever,” says John Lund, Rhinelander, Wis., who uses the unit on his Ford 4500 loader/backhoe (ph 800 526-8538; www.amulet.com).

The Hoe Clamp consists of a pin-on, full motion thumb that fits most standard and extendable stick backhoes up to 30,000 lbs. It’s operated by bucket curl using Amulet’s patented kidney link design. The unit requires no additional hydraulics on the backhoe.

“It’s a mechanical clamp that mounts on a

backhoe, replacing some of the linkage and pins,” says Lund. “The Hoe Clamp moves as the bucket moves. It can be pinned in 2 different locations, depending on the type of work you’re doing. I usually use it in a position where I can still dig. It’s extremely useful in building rock walls, and is easier to use than a hydraulic thumb. The company builds these units to specifically fit your backhoe.”

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treat individual weeds by dabbing on a small amount of liquid weed killer. It consists of a 4 1/2-ft. long, 3/4-in. dia. pipe with a spring-loaded pump at the bottom end. To use it, you simply press the Dobber down over a weed to release some chemical. However, after treating about a half dozen plants the plunger on the activating rod bent, causing it to leak.”

Fred Swartz, Penn.: “This is absolutely the worst product I’ve ever purchased – bar none,” says Fred about his 2010 **Cub Cadet** vacuum mulcher. “The engine is almost impossible to start. I bought this machine at Home Depot but they washed their hands of the matter, saying I would have to go to Cub Cadet. But the company didn’t respond to my warranty request and told me to take the machine 25 miles away to get it repaired. Instead, I bought the parts and repaired it myself. However, it still doesn’t work well.

“This product is heavy, ungainly and just a pain to work with. I definitely won’t buy a Cub Cadet product again. And no longer will I go to a box store to purchase power equipment. How any company could take a quality name like Cub Cadet from the 60’s and 70’s and make it this bad is beyond me.”

Robert E. Whitehead, Kiowa, Colo.: “I like my 2008 **Deere** 5325 MFWD tractor. It’s equipped with a 553 front-end loader, 24-speed shuttle transmission and a fully equipped cab. I really like the quick-tach bucket. I bought a bale spear and pallet forks for the loader, and I can change from one to the other in less than 5 min. The engine runs smooth but is somewhat noisy.”

Daryl Treadway, Roy, Wash.: “My 2008 **Volkswagen** Jetta averages 42 mpg on diesel fuel. I’ve only driven it about 44,000 miles so far but am well pleased with its performance. “My **Kubota** RTV 900 utility vehicle keeps on running with few problems. Keep up the good work, Kubota; I’ll be back for more.”

Ken Spiering, Valleyford, Wash.: Ken nominates his 2012 diesel-powered **Kubota** GR2120-54 4-WD riding mower as “best buy”. “I live on a hill and have to mow 3 1/2 acres every week, and this mower performs flawlessly. It has a wide wheelbase and is heavy enough to make it stable even when running sideways on fairly steep slopes. It cuts evenly and is well designed with commercial grade construction. It almost has a zero turning radius.

“Another thing I like is that it has positive hydrostatic drive so the tractor stops when

the foot pedal is returned to neutral, even when I’m headed downhill. The 4-WD allows the mower to go up and down hills without slipping and without binding on tight turns. It’s truly a dream machine.”

Harold Paulson, Otis, Mass.: “My 2010 **Kuuma** Vapor-Fire 200 wood gasification furnace works great (ph 800 358-2049; www.lampkakuuma.com). I haven’t had to use my oil furnace to heat my house for 2 years. Excellent company service.”

Gerald Argyle, Duchesne, Utah: Gerald likes his **Honda** 110 rototiller. “I’m a gardener, and this little rototiller is a great time saver. It starts easy and is light and easy to move around. I like the 4-stroke engine.”

Reinhard Grenz, Trapper Creek, Alaska: “The **Argo** Conquest off-road amphibious ATV I bought in 2002 still performs like new. I’ve taken it over some really rough trails but it has never failed me. Doesn’t matter if I go through snow, swamps, or open water, it’s unstoppable. My friend would like to buy it, but I’m not sure I can sell it.”

Marc Perkins, Star City, Sask.: “My **Jinma** 284 is a great little tractor. It’s like buying a new tractor with 30-year-old technology. Maybe it’s not as good as some other brands, but it’s at least 3/4 as good for 1/3 the cost. For lighter work it holds up fine, and it’s extremely fuel efficient.”

Doug Creswell, Mount Airy, Md.: Doug likes the **Sherrill** replacement blades he bought for his extendable pole saw (ph 800 525-8873; www.Sherrilltree.com). “I have a lot of old apple trees that needed pruning. Limbs – some quite large – were too high to risk using a chainsaw. The original blade on my extendable pole saw was struggling to do the work, and I’m 77 years old and need all the help I can get. I got on the internet and found Sherrilltree.com in Greensboro, North Carolina. They had the best selection of replacement blades I could find. I bought their 12-in. ARS Razor-Sharp Tooth with Gulleets. I tried it and it works great. It did twice the work in half the time and with much less effort.”

John R. Linton, Westminster, Md.: “I’m pleased with the wiring harness I bought for my IH 404 tractor from **Agri-Services** wiring harness specialists (ph 716 937-6618; www.wiringharness.com). I saw their advertisement in Tractor Shop magazine. After I was quoted a price the harness came in the mail and it fit perfectly.”