

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

By: Mark Newhall
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Randy Okerman, Port Townsend, Wash.: Randy likes his 2006 **Lanair MX 150** waste oil furnace. “It’s safe and clean with no smoke or smell. We got personal attention from the manufacturer when needed. Low maintenance. I run it about 400 hrs. annually, burning about 400 gal. of waste oil. All I have to do is screen and dewater the oil, vacuum out burner ash occasionally, and brush the burner ring yearly.”

Mark Newhall, Lakeville, Minn.: “I bought my first LED flashlight 2 years ago and I couldn’t be happier. The batteries seem to last forever, and it’s as bright as any flashlight I’ve ever owned. It’s a **Guide Gear** light I bought at Amazon.com. The exact model I have is no longer available but there are many similar ones. The great thing about the LED light is that it uses much less power and doesn’t get hot. The batteries last longer and the bulbs don’t seem to wear out.”

Katharina M. Lauer, Stillwater, Penn.: “My 2012 **Ford Raptor 4-WD** pickup is an



the top is ripped, and I’m afraid to inquire about the price of a new part. I’m not a spring chicken any more so repairing this machine has become a burden. When I purchased this expensive unit I expected at least 10 years of trouble-free service.”

Darin Bartholomous, Mora, Minn.: “I like my 2005 **Cub Cadet 1125** series riding mower equipped with a **Kawasaki 17 hp** engine. It runs great and has plenty of power. It does a great job cutting grass, and I’ve used it with a trailer to haul several cords of firewood out of the woods.”

Jay Ledbetter, Stanford, Mont.: “My **Hesston 4650** small square baler, which I bought used, is my worst buy. My **Deere 346** baler had been having problems so 5 years ago I bought the Hesston model sight unseen from a local dealer. He said their service department had gone completely through the baler and that it was ready to go.

“I took the machine home, loaded it up with twine, greased and lubed everything and started baling. On its fourth bale it sheared off the needles, which cost \$385 to repair. A week later I started in the field again and it worked great for 26 bales and then it threw a no. 60 chain. Soon after, a bearing on the fingers carriage seized, at a repair cost of \$285.

“Now I have more than \$10,000 tied up in a baler that to date has made 57 bales. This has gone way past a worst buy and might just be criminal. By the way, the old **Deere 346** still works and turns out beautiful bales.”

Jack Justice, Hebron, Ohio: “My wife and I couldn’t be happier with our **Grasshopper** mowers (ph 620 345-8621; www.grasshoppermower.com). We mow about 10 acres, much of it wooded, and these mowers never let us down. We’ve relied on **Grasshopper** mowers for more than 30 years and wouldn’t have anything else. We currently have a 10-year-old **725K** front-mount model and just replaced a 26-year-old **718K** model with a **620T** model. The **718** model was still running strong but I felt I should replace it before I retire.

“At about 2,300 hrs the **718** model developed a hydro problem with one of the drives. **Grasshopper Service** out of Kansas provided a rebuilt unit at a reasonable price. The **Grasshopper** vacuum attachment does an outstanding job, and you just can’t beat its capacity and ease of operation.

“My dad’s best buy was a 1953 **Allis Chalmers WD** tractor that he bought new. This tractor was the workhorse on our dairy farm. It ran day and night in the spring and fall for many years, requiring little more than tires and routine service. The tractor is now semi retired, but it still starts without fail and purrs like a kitten.”

Ron Snow, Wynne, Ark.: “My 2000 **Dodge Grand Caravan** has about 367,000 miles on it, and all I’ve replaced are the fuel pump, water pump, and rack and pinion steering. Otherwise this vehicle has required only routine maintenance.”

Mike Crawford, Bradford, Penn.: “Even if my **Stihl MS290** Farm Boss chainsaw sets idle for 3 to 4 mos., I never have to pull more than twice to get it started. My **Stihl FS45** trimmer also starts right up. When this trimmer was 6 years old, I accidentally jammed it with heavy grass and spun out the drive hex in the plastic head. I took the broken head off to have the dealer replace it. I had forgotten about the company’s lifetime guarantee on the head, but the dealer hadn’t. When I picked up the trimmer two days later it had a new head and there was no charge.

“I had a lot of trouble starting my **Stihl BG55** leaf blower right after I bought it. I had to pull 8 to 10 times before it would start. I returned it to the dealer, who had me try to start the unit while he watched. I left the blower with him and they found a pinched

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**

engineering marvel and an operator’s dream from its moon roof and full leather seats to its full line of superior electronics. It’s a complete ‘wow’ to own.

“Another great product, also made in America, is my **Retrax** pro bed cover system custom-made to fit on my extra wide **Raptor** short bed (www.retrax.com). It was simple to install and looks good on the truck. It opens and closes easily by hand, locking at any location. It’s a luxurious-looking, superior functioning unit that’s very well designed.”

Mike Bordovsky, San Antonio, Texas: “I use my **Echo** gas-powered pole pruner to clean out fence lines. It’s like a chainsaw on a stick and is perfect for getting in and under brush and cactus. Using a regular chainsaw, you have to crawl in and often get scratched up getting at the base branches, trimming them away or pushing through them to get at the trunk.

“With the pole pruner, I have an 8-ft. reach and can stand away from the branches, yet reach in to trim them or cut the trunk. It’s also great for getting between barbwire to reach branches and trunks on the other side of the fence. It’s easy to control because the small gas engine balances the weight of the cutting bar.”

Douglas F. Siadak, Liberty Center, Ohio: “I looked forward to the arrival of our new 2006 **Staber** clothes washing machine with its supposed money-saving features. However, within the first year our troubles began. First, a set of bearings suspending the wash drum went out. The warranty covered the cost of new bearings, but I had to install them. Two or three years later another set of bearings went bad and I had to pay for those, too.

“The next problem was more expensive. A circuit board blew out and cost almost \$300 to replace. Now the rubber diverter around