

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

"After I wore out my 1995 **Chevrolet** Geo Metro, I bought a 1999 model. Both were best buys. I drove the 1995 model more than 75 miles per day to work and back and replaced the tires every 1 1/2 years. The 12-in. tires cost only \$24 apiece. I changed the oil every 2,000 miles, but the engine uses only 3 1/2 quarts. I did a timing belt change at 150,000 miles and a tune-up at 100,000 miles. At 200,000 miles I traded it in."

Terry S. Galbreath, Calhan, Colo.: "I bought a **NorthStar** pressure washer in 1993 (Northern Tool & Equipment, ph 800 221-0516; www.northerntool.com). After 20 years of nearly daily use and some maintenance here and there, it was tired. So I bought a new one with a hose cart, at about half the cost of a Hotsy, and it's also a great machine. I expect it to outlive me."

Mike Roub, Chuckaloon, Alaska: "I like my 2006 **Ski-Doo** Skandic SWT snowmobile. We built some 4-ski sleds to pull behind it and then used them to haul 2,000-lb. loads 50 miles into the Brooks Range of Alaska. No other machine I know of could have done this with the ease this machine did the job. I've owned snowmobiles since the mid 1960's, but nothing compares to this one."

"I bought my 2005 **GM Duramax** 1-ton pickup used with less than 70,000 miles on it, but it has had a number of electrical issues. First, the transmission went bad, then the fuel transfer pump quit while I was on a trip up north where I really needed both fuel tanks. Over the years I've had to limp home twice on failsafe mode."

Gordon Elliott, Norwood, Ont.: "It's lightweight yet has a lot of power," says Gordon about his 2011 **Dolmar** chainsaw. "The decompression valve makes it easy to start. I like the design of the spike bar – it has a toothed stop for holding the saw steady against wood."

Merrill J. Smith, Deer Park, Wash.: "I've had great success with **Makita** tools, both corded and cordless, including drills, a chopsaw, 7.2-volt flashlight, sawzall, and 1/4-in. hex impact driver. The flashlight was left outside on the ground all winter underneath 4 ft. of snow, but when I found it the following spring it was still charged and worked fine. I use the impact driver nearly every day and haven't had to recharge the lithium battery in it yet after almost a year."

"The battery-powered sprayer I bought at **Northern Tool** would hardly spray far enough out to clear my feet, and the batteries lasted only about 20 min. before they went dead. I also bought a water well pressure tank from **Northern Tool**. It was advertised as an 80-gal. model but turned out to be only 35 gal. I called to see why and was told the ad meant it 'performed like 80 an gal.'. What a farce."

Mike Kuzara, Wyarano, Wyo.: "My **Dremel** Multi-Max oscillating tool is the handiest tool for remodeling projects I've ever used (www.dremel.com). Works great for a wide variety of jobs including cutting, grinding, sanding, scraping and grout removal. It gets into tight places and does a great job of flush cutting."

Walter McFarland, St. Johns, Fla.: A 1953 **Ford** Jubilee tractor rates as Walter's all-time "best buy". "We still use this tractor every day. At first my dad used it with a root rake and bush hog to get rid of palmetto trees. He also used it to level countless loads of dirt, to pull engines, and to haul cars and logs."

"The tractor's hour meter broke in 1977 so I don't know how many hours it has now. The clutch and brake pedals have been used so many times that the edges on my work boots have worn down to a knife-sharp edge. Numerous times the tractor's front end has come off the ground from popping the clutch."

"We converted the tractor to 12 volts, rebuilt the hydraulic system, and replaced the radiator, clutch, and front tires. It still has the original rear tires. Regular maintenance is the key to why it's still running."

Terry D. Bobo, Guthrie, Okla.: Terry's impressed with his **Deere 757** zero-turn riding mower. "This machine has plenty of power, works fast and just keeps on running. It did have a valve problem early on, but the dealer promptly took care of it."

"The **Masterbuilt Smoker** I bought at Bass Pro Shop worked okay for a year, but then the electronic time and temperature control went out at a cost of \$300. Neither Bass Pro nor the company would help. My wife then bought another model, but it lasted only 2 years before a door gasket fell apart. I contacted the company but they said they don't keep parts and wouldn't help. I think this company builds smokers to sell, not to service."

Harry Rehberg, Blooming Grove, N.Y.: "I like my **Toro** Titan MX5480 riding mower equipped with a 23 hp Kawasaki engine and 54-in. deck. It works somewhat like a skid loader. My wife has adapted it for her own personal use and I use it occasionally. It works fast and makes short work of our sometimes overgrown fields."

William A. Hauck, Ferndale, Wash.: "Our 1987 **Deere 265** riding mower has taken a licking but still works great. We've replaced the deck belts and bearings but it has had no major problems. We also like our 2010 **Deere 2305** tractor."

"Our **DR** field and brush mower is equipped with a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton engine and on just about every start it pulls the starter cord out of my hands, inflicting pain in my hand. I should have bought an electric start model."

Leonard Baylor, Carlton, Wash.: "This is one tough machine," says Leonard about his 1999 **Cub Cadet 1641** riding mower equipped with a 48-in. deck. "The deck has tangled with wire fencing and rocks but has stood up to it. All I've replaced are a belt, blades and an electric clutch connector to the pto. Otherwise it has required only routine maintenance."

"It's built heavy and makes a nice windrow. We can also use it to bed animals."

"My 2004 **Ford F-150** pickup gets only about 10 mpg pulling a trailer and 12 to 13 mpg empty. The same models now being offered by Ford are advertised to get closer to 20 mpg. Why can't the company offer some kind of a retrofit kit that would make my model more fuel efficient?"

John C. Haldemann, Chinook, Mont.: "Our 2012 **Tube-Line** Bale Boss II big square bale processor-feeder is a great machine (ph 888 856-6613; www.tubeline.ca). It's built heavy and makes a nice windrow, and we can also use it to bed animals."

"Our 2012 **Dodge 1/2-ton** crewcab, 4-WD shortbed pickup equipped with a 5.7-liter, V-8 gas engine works great. It gets good mileage as it automatically switches to 4 cylinders for easy going on the highway, yet it has tremendous power when we need it. It's equipped with an automatic transmission that switches to manual for braking when going down hills. I love good pickups, and this one really fits the bill."

Kenneth Shields, Cedaredge, Colo.: "It does a nicer job and works faster than any other soil conditioning implement on the

market," says Kenneth about his 2010 **King Kutter 72-in.**, 3-pt. mounted rototiller. "I use this machine with my **Deere 5400** 60 hp tractor on my own farm, as well as to do custom work. It's built extremely rugged and holds up even in rocky soil. The Deere tractor is also a best buy."

Matt Pettet, Ontario, Ore.: "It has less than 1,000 miles on it but uses oil like crazy," says Matt about his 2008 **Polaris RZR** Side By Side utility vehicle equipped with an 800 cc engine. "The engine oil goes from the 'full' mark to the 'add' mark in less than 50 miles, and the company doesn't seem to care. I checked on the internet and found this appears to be a common problem for that year."

Lois Link, Castile, N.Y.: "We use **Soap Nuts** instead of laundry detergent to wash our laundry and think they're fantastic (ph 306 752-0709; www.buyssoapnuts.com). A 2-lb. bag will wash more than 330 loads. According to the company, Soap Nuts can also be used in place of hair shampoo and to replace other household cleaners. You can even use them to make your own dishwasher soap. They eliminate the need for fabric softener and are non-allergenic."

Bill Shultz, Millbrook, N.Y.: Bill's 1966 **Wheel Horse 1257** tractor equipped with a 4-speed transmission is still going strong. "It has required only minor, everyday maintenance. I'm now restoring it, and hopefully it will last another 46 years."

"**Tractor Supply Company** changed its line of paints without telling their customers. I'm just hoping I have enough paint to complete the restoration of my tractor without the hassle of trying to match colors."

Brian Gilbertson, Melfort, Sask.: Brian's glad he bought a **Deere 200CX** front-end loader for his **Deere 2305** tractor. "About 3 years ago our **Deere 318** garden tractor and snowblower were having problems. I took the tractor and snowblower to the dealer for repairs, and while there a salesman told me there was a good price on new garden/yard tractors. I ended up buying a new **Deere 2305** tractor plus a new snowblower, tiller and mower. I also bought a 200CX loader, which is a best buy. I've found endless uses for this loader around our yard. I'd be at a loss without it."

Daniel Burgoyne, Mahone Bay, N.S.: Daniel's the satisfied owner of a 2011 **Mantis XP** rototiller equipped with a Honda 35cc, 4-stroke engine. "This rototiller is reliable, easy to handle, and has a lot of power for its size. The tines turn fast, creating a good seedbed. The tiller is also lightweight so it's easy to transport."

Jim Symynshen, Arborg, Man.: "My 2007 **Toyota** Sienna minivan is reliable and easy on fuel. It gets more than 30 mpg."

"My 2010 **Kubota B30/30** utility tractor equipped with a cab, front-end loader and front-mount snowblower is a best buy."

Ronald Cunningham, Portland, N.Y.: "I switched to using **Texas Refinery Corp. (TRC)** Moly Pro Spec IV 15W-40 engine oil in my 1972 International B-275 tractor, and I'm glad I did. It reduced oil consumption from a quart every 8 to 10 hours to a quart every 25 to 30 hours. An expensive oil got inexpensive, real quick. I'm sure others might not get exactly the same results, but for me it was definitely worth the money."

Donald Thomas, Boonsboro, Md.: "We tried 3 other brands but this one was the best," says Donald about his **Takeuchi TL250** skid loader (ph 706 693-3600; www.takeuchi-us.com). "It's a good, low maintenance machine with fewer moving parts and better grading ability. The rollers and sprockets on it cost only about half as much as other brands."

Jessica Fernandes, Deer Park, Wash.:

Jessica nominates her 2012 **Worx** GT weed trimmer as her "best buy" (ph 866 354-9679; www.worx.com). "After mowing my 1 3/4-acre lawn I was too worn out to use my old weed eater. I didn't like having to mix the gas and do a lot of pulling to get it started. With the **Worx GT** I just install the battery and away I go. It weighs only 5 1/2 lbs. so my arms don't get sore, and there's no mixing gas and no pulling to start. It's equipped with an adjustable spacer that protects plants, flowers and garden furniture from damage while I'm using it."

She's disappointed with her 2006 **Frigidaire** electric convection oven. "After 4 years the bottom element on it quit working. I tried to get a replacement but was told the element wasn't the problem but instead it was the computer chip in the clock. I paid just over \$500 for the oven yet they wanted \$199.95 for the part, plus \$125 and mileage to come and repair it from the same store where I bought it. No more Frigidaire anything for me."

Ben Parks, Austin, Texas: "I've purchased 4 pairs of **Red Wing** boots over the past 15 years. I do a lot of walking at work but find these boots are hard to wear out. The heel, soles and leather hold up well and are practically indestructible."

"I recently purchased my second set of **B.F. Goodrich** all-terrain TA truck tires. The first set lasted 5 years and went more than 60,000 miles with no problems. In fact, they still had tread on them. The only reason I replaced them was because of weather-cracking between the treads."

Brian Egan, Nine Mile Falls, Wash.: Brian's impressed with his 2001 **Dodge 2500** quad cab 4-WD pickup equipped with a turbocharged diesel engine. "It has more than 307,000 miles yet I've spent less than \$1,000 on repairs. It still runs and drives like new and has plenty of power, and it averages 19 1/2 mpg. The batteries and shocks are original, as is most everything else. I've driven this pickup in all kinds of bad weather and in eyeball-deep mud. It's the best vehicle I've ever owned. I should have bought two more just like it."

John Kazda, Albany, Texas: "I've used my 2005 **Land Pride** Treker utility vehicle to build fences, haul feed, spray and seed with no problems. It now has almost 1,000 hrs. on it."

John W. Collins, Sherburne, N.Y.: John likes his **Cub Cadet** Yanmar SC2400 garden tractor equipped with a 60-in. deck and 48-in. loader bucket. "I had an old T340 crawler equipped with a big bucket that I rebuilt and used it to move dirt. Then my son bought the **Cub Cadet** for me and mounted a 12-in. auger on back. It worked so well that I sold the crawler. The **Cub Cadet** is a great tractor."

"While building a 12 by 40-ft. addition on my 24 by 40-ft. garage some of my old shop tools died, such as a Sears 1/2-in. electric drill and a Milwaukee sawzall. So I went out and bought a **Porter Cable** sawzall, circular saw and drill, and a **Hitachi** 18-volt cordless impact driver. They're all best buys. I'm 84 years young, and the **Hitachi** impact driver saves my arm since driving screws is a lot easier than driving nails."

Robert McMahon, Knoxville, Tenn.: Robert's impressed with his 1983 **Husqvarna 266SE** chainsaw. Over the years I've put 5 to 10 gal. of gas per year through it, which comes out to about 200 gal. total. I've used it to cut firewood that was too big to split. I've replaced the fuel line and spark plug once, the anti-vibe mounts twice and many bars and chains. I use 50:1 oil mix in 2 gal. of gas instead of 2 1/2 gal. The saw still starts good and runs fine. I wish everything was made this well."