

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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here on the island where we live. I haven't had to use him, though."



Richard A. Willems, New Windsor, Ill.: Richard nominates his **Heftee Lift 2000** as his "best buy" (ph 800 755-7540; www.heftee.com). It can lift up to 2,000 lbs. up to 6 ft. high in 30 seconds, and is adjustable for a variety of wheelbases.

"I repair lawn mowers, and the Heftee Lift 2000 lets me position them at a convenient height. I can even raise the mower high enough to remove the blades while standing. I also own a **Heftee** deck cart, which lets me remove the deck with the mower raised. I also bought a **Heftee 250** lift for use with walk-behind mowers. Now I never have to get down on the floor to work on mowers."

Vickie Malugg, Wittenberg, Wis.: "We like our 2004 **Case IH 2388** combine. For years we harvested with a **Case IH 1688**. Switching to the 2388 has been a great experience. It has an operator friendly cab.

"We use a 2009 **Deere** header transport cart to move our **Case IH 2606** combine head. The problem is this cart has no suspension. As a result, we can go only about 30 mph following behind our trucks or else the cart will start to bounce. Also, the rock trap on the combine makes the machine hard to load and unload from the cart."

Tim Stephens, City of Central, La.: "This tractor has done everything I've asked it to do," reports Tim about his 2007 **Kubota L3400 4-WD** loader tractor, which he uses with a **Woods** finishing mower. "The system has auto-release points in the hydraulics that won't let you tear it up, which I think is great. It may not be perfect, but it's close to it. The **Woods** mower is also a best buy.

"I like the frame and overall construction on my 2010 **King Cutter** 6-ft. bush hog. However, already the seals are leaking and the grease fittings are loose. And I'm disappointed how it performs in tall grass."

Robert G. McCrory DVM, Benton, Ky.: "I've found my **Medi-Dart** extension syringe to be worthless, even after a part replacement."

Stephen Wilson, Rogersville, Mo.: "I like my **Mac Tools** 1/4-in. drive air ratchet (ph 800 622-8665; www.mactools.com). I bought



2 of these ratchets and they're a delight to use. They're polished and smooth on my hands and are built tough. A 1/4-in. drive air ratchet may be too small for working on farm stuff, but it works great for repairing lawn mower engines. Also, you can work on most new cars with 1/4-in. drive tools.

"In 2008 my father's estate gave me a new 2004 **Chevrolet 2500 4-WD** pickup. We went out to California to pick it up with

only 1,242 miles on it. We made it back from California just fine, even though the pickup bed was loaded and we were pulling a trailer loaded with 3,500 lbs. of stuff. Now this pickup has almost 20,000 miles on it and there are problems. The Allison automatic transmission shifts funny, and the heater/air conditioner switch panel doesn't work. The switch cost \$222 to replace and the pickup's warranty has expired. This pickup isn't built as good as my old 1957 model. Anyone could keep that pickup going."

Robert Frear, McBride, B.C.: A 2005 **Kubota B7501 HST** tractor rates as Robert's "best buy". "This tractor has a heart of gold. I had a crippling stroke and wasn't too impressed with the selection of wheelchairs out there, so I decided to buy this tractor, too. Now I get more done than I ever could when I was young and healthy. Wheelchairs are by default self-defeating, while Kubota tractors are enabling to the highest degree."

Robert L. Newman, Gold Bar, Wash.: Robert likes **WD-40 Smart Straw** spray lubricant (ph 888 324-7596; www.wd40.com). The aerosol can comes with a permanently attached straw that sprays 2 ways.

You flip the straw up for a precision stream and down for a regular spray action. "You don't have to worry about losing an unattached straw or having to look for a straw that pops out," says Robert.



Robert McIlmoil, Hamilton, Ill.: "I received a **Kershaw 1600** pocket knife as a gift in 2005, and I carry it with me everywhere I go and use it daily. It has held up extremely well compared to other knives I've had in the past. It has an internal spring that flips the blade open so I can open it using just one hand. Two weeks ago the spring broke, so I contacted the company to see if I could purchase a new spring. Instead, they said they would send me a new spring free of charge and I received it just 3 days later. Excellent customer service backing up an excellent product."

Mike Shull, Leitchfield, Ky.: "My best buy is a **Deere 468** round baler equipped with a silage kit. I've used it to make about 2,500 bales with no problems. It replaced a **Deere 466** model that also performed well. The monitor on this machine allows me to make solid, square-shouldered bales day after day."

Michael Rhodes, Capron, Ill.: "Our **Fuji FinePix JV** camera takes great photos and is easy to use. It also works great for making movies and is an amazing product for its size. And, it's reasonably priced.

"Our **Eden Pure** quartz infrared portable heater gobbles electricity and boosted our electricity bill from an average of \$90 per month to \$315. It didn't save any money heating our home."

Gene Comstock, Milton, Penn.: "My 2011 **Ford F-250** pickup equipped with a 6.3-liter, V-8 gas engine and 6-speed automatic transmission is my worst buy. The company claims 'best in class economy' for this pickup. Yet it gets only 13 mpg empty and 10 mpg when towing a 7,000-lb. GVW trailer. The engine is gutless, and the transmission is constantly shifting gears with mild acceleration. As a result, I'm always trying to find a power band that doesn't exist."

Donnie Matthews, Stockbridge, Ga.: "My late 1970's **Kubota L260**, which I bought used, is a great tractor. My only maintenance cost was \$10 for a used battery.

"The hose and spray gun on my **Husky** electric pressure washer started leaking,

causing pressure problems. Neither the company nor Home Depot would help. So I cut off the electric cord and hooked it up to a big fan, and then threw the pressure washer away."

Paul Pearce II, Chesapeake, Va.: Paul's had problems with his 2006 **Ford F-350** pickup equipped with a 6.0-liter diesel engine. "I bought this pickup in August 2007. Since then it has left me stranded on the side of the road at least twice a year. Sometimes I was pulling a trailer, and sometimes I was out of town on vacation. Fortunately, I had bought an extended bumper-to-bumper warranty or I'd have spent about \$24,000 on repairs.

"The last time the pickup broke down, the extended warranty had expired by just 400 miles and the company wanted \$900 to replace the fuel injection control module. I was so mad I called Ford's corporate office, but they told me to call the Better Business Bureau. So I had the pickup towed away and swore not to spend another penny on it."

Gordon Easton, Clayton, Calif.: "I like **Gorilla** tape. It beats silver duct tape, hands down, and is especially useful in outdoor applications. I do wish the tape was available in camouflage colors."

Duane E. Ingram, Lincoln, Ill.: "I use a 48-in. snowblower on my 2002 **Simplicity** Landlord garden tractor. The snowblower can easily clear 8-in. deep snow from my driveway in no time. I also use the snowblower to clear my neighbor's driveway and to clear snow around buildings."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2009 **Shindaiwa** "long shaft" weed eater. "I don't like the counterclockwise rotation of the string, and using this 'long shaft' weed eater gives me a sore back. I wish I still had my **Echo 1100** series curved shaft model. That was a good machine."

Dwayne Yoder, LaRussell, Mo.: Dwayne's impressed with his **Makita** 18-volt cordless impact drill. "It's the most dependable, long lasting and easy-to-handle driver/drill I've ever used. I bought 5 of them for my crew to use."

Thomas Cooke, Lubec, Maine: A 1985 **TroyBilt** rototiller rates as Thomas's "best buy". "I use it every year to plant 2 acres of onions, and it always starts on the first pull. I know I can count on this tiller year after year."

"Before I drive anywhere at night, I have to bang on the headlights to get them to work."

He's had electrical problems with his 2003 **GM Sierra 1500 4-WD** pickup. "The lights inside the cab and the headlights work only when they feel like it. At night, before I drive anywhere I have to start the pickup and set the emergency brake, then get out and walk to the front of the vehicle and bang on the headlights to get them to work. I have to do the same for the interior lights. The dealer and other shops in my area don't have a clue what's wrong."

Brad Treika, Junction City, Wis.: "I like my 1983 **MillerMatic 35** wire feed welder. I use it almost every day. One time I melted the leads right off. I took the welder in to have it fixed, and it worked like new again. I'd recommend this welder to anyone.

"In 2009 I bought an **Ingersoll Rand 13 hp** portable air compressor from Northern Tool & Equipment. It's equipped with a 30-gal. tank and a Honda engine that delivers 25 cfm at 175 psi. I ordered the unit in May but

didn't receive it until October 15.

"Once I started the compressor it ran for only about 30 seconds before the drive belt flew off. I aligned the pulleys and put the belt back on, and it worked a little longer. I did everything according to the owner's manual but got no help from Northern Tool. We were becoming the laughing stock of service trucks in our area because a tank of gas in the truck would last longer than the belts on the compressor.

"I had to borrow a compressor from a customer, while the shiny new compressor on my truck was nothing more than a boat anchor. I called **Ingersoll Rand** and they scheduled a technician to make a service call. The company wasn't happy that I had bought the compressor from Northern Tool instead of from one of their sales outlets. The technician came out 3 or 4 times and found the pulley on the compressor was machined wrong so the belt wouldn't ride in the sheave properly. He changed the pulley, but again the belt came off. Then the technician talked to an assembly line worker at the factory, who said the belt had the wrong tension level. We made an adjustment and that seems to have solved the problem. Now the compressor is out of warranty so I'm on my own. So far so good, though.

"My neighbor purchased a similar air compressor from **Harbor Freight** about the same time for \$1,000, while mine cost \$2,450. His compressor is made in China, but he says nothing has gone wrong and he's well satisfied with it. I think we might want to rethink the American pride and quality of products."

Lee Webb, Morris, Minn.: "I like my **Brute** 3,000 psi pressure washer equipped with a **Briggs & Stratton** engine (ph 800 743-4115; www.brutepower.com). It starts and runs well and removes hardened dirt and grease from my skid loader without needing detergent. It comes with 4 different tips for different applications. One tip can be used to remove old paint in preparation for painting tractors."

Dick Day, Norfolk, Neb.: Dick's impressed with the **Braber** Agrieauge 72-in., 3-pt. mounted snowblower he bought at Northern Tool & Equipment (www.northerntool.com). "I was skeptical of a 72-in. snowblower that sells for about half or less of comparable units. So I did research on Braber Equipment and asked some questions before buying this unit. The customer support folks at Northern Tool helped put me in touch with the right person at Braber, and he was able to answer my questions about quality, pricing and parts availability. I felt so comfortable with his answers that I immediately ordered one.

"Upon arrival, I expected to see a snowblower that resembled a high school metal shop project. But what I received instead was a well constructed piece of equipment that will still be working long after I'm gone. The fit and finish is the same as what I see on other brands sitting on implement dealer lots. The first time I engaged the pto I thought it was broken because the machine ran so quiet."

Eugene Hawes, Baker City, Ore.: Eugene is a fence contractor and rancher who likes his 2007 **Honda Foreman 500** and 2000 **Honda Foreman 450 4-wheeler**. "I bought both machines new and use them all year long for building fences, checking on irrigation systems, and blowing snow. These machines are true workhorses and have required only general maintenance."

William T. Angus, Rhodes, Mich.: "I have about a dozen pairs of U.S.-made **Danner** boots, and they're all great (ph 877 432-6637; www.danner.com). I've worn these shoes since 1994 and have 2 pairs