

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

that have been resoled twice. Chinese-made Danner boots are also available, but I have no first hand knowledge of them and won't buy them. Unfortunately, you have to buy U.S.-made Danner boots online as most retailers won't sell them in stores. The boots start at \$200 and go up. However, once you invest in quality footwear you won't buy cheap boots again.

"We bought a **Staber** washing machine after reading a lot of good things about it. These washing machines are made in the U.S., use little water, and are designed so the owner can easily repair them. Now I know why. We spent \$1,000 to buy our machine a few years ago, and about a year later the pump motor went out. The new motor was about 60 percent bigger so it barely cleared the housing. That tells me the original motor was undersized from the factory. A year later another part on the machine broke.

"If you don't get the detergent level just right, this machine will overflow. It's easy for the load to become unbalanced, which causes a lot of vibration. That can cause the main seal to rip and the main flywheel to come loose. Also, the mounting on the flywheel became elongated and I had to repair the pot metal. I can't afford a new seal.

"Often when loads get unbalanced the timer will trip up and stick. As a result, my

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wife can't just put in a load and do other chores; she has to babysit the machine. Now the machine needs \$500 worth of parts to get it working again, but I won't put even one penny into it. For the money I've spent on this machine, it should have come with a boatload of spare parts."

Darnell Carrer, Roxboro, N.C.: "My worst buy was my wife's 2005 **Chrysler** Town and Country van. At 24,000 miles, when the 3-year warranty had already expired, the driver's side window motor had to be replaced at a cost of more than \$400. The rack and pinion gear started leaking at about 35,000 miles and the repair would have cost more than \$600, but fortunately the shop replaced it at no charge. At 39,000 miles the water pump started leaking, and that cost more than \$200 to resolve. Now the van has just over 40,000 miles on it and the remote door locks don't work."

T.M. and W.D. Bysel, Kansas City, Mo.: "My 2005 **Montana** 4045 tractor works as good as a Kubota but cost a lot less. It's an excellent tractor.

"I think all electric tools from **Harbor Freight** are worst buys. I've had problems with my 18-volt drill-drivers, 4-in. grinder, and sawzall. They have no bearings - only bushings that fail quickly."

Robert Olson, Alexandria, Minn.: "I've owned more than 25 new pickups in the past 50 years, and this one is the best yet," says Robert about his 2009 **Ford** F-150 4-WD crewcab FX4. "It has about 34,000 miles on it. The ride, drive, gas mileage, pulling power, visibility, comfort and handling on it are fantastic."

Tom Tijerino, Fallon, Nevada: "My 1974 **Dodge** Ram 4-WD PowerWagon 1-ton dually pickup is a good old grunt truck. I use it around our property and as a combination service truck and to plow snow with the front-mount blade. Now I've added a boom and packed the service bed with tools."

Tim Gasser, Prairie Du Sac, Wis.: "I use

AmSteel Blue winch rope for pulling logs and it's an amazing product (ph 785 856-1844; www.customsplice.com). This 1/2-in. rope has a 34,000-lb. rating yet it'll float on water. It's much easier to work with than conventional steel cable."

Scott Freeman, Lucas, Ohio: "We leased a 2005 **Caterpillar** 908 front-end loader equipped with a grapple bucket. Even though the Cat loader cost 2 to 3 times more than a skid loader, it can do 3 to 4 times more work. It articulates in the center and can turn short without wearing out the tires. It also has great lifting power and reach and is quick and smooth to operate."

James Price, O' Fallon, Mo.: "My best buy is my 2006 **Deere** X 457 garden tractor equipped with a 54C mower deck. I use it to mow my yard and other acreage with no problems."

Gerald Bontrager, Goshen, Ind.: Gerald likes a solderless copper bonding "glue" called **Just For Copper** (ph 866 304-5335; www.justforcopper.com). It comes in a small applicator tube and lets you work with copper pipe the way you'd work with pvc pipe. When applied to copper it generates a chemical reaction, providing a hermetic weld that's watertight and air tight, with no need for solder. "I did some copper plumbing with this product and it works fantastic," says Gerald.

Danny Thomas, Whitewood, Sask.: "I'm happy with the **B&W** turnover ball hitch I installed on my Dodge 3500 pickup (ph 877 774-6473; www.sdtrucksprings.com). It has the largest load capacity of any fifth wheel hitch ball on the market and leaves the floor of the truck box smooth. There are no annoying rails or plates.

"I like my **Sirius** satellite radio boombox, which I use in our shop and house. When you're limited by location to mostly boring AM radio channels, the sound quality and variety of formats with this setup are terrific. A 1-year subscription costs \$160, which I

Wayne Tabor, Louisville, Ky.: "My **Bixby** pellet stove is difficult to regulate and produces excessive amounts of ash. The convection motor failed, and a new motor costs \$296 plus an additional \$170 if you don't return the old motor. I called the company for technical assistance, and they had the gall to inform me they charged \$25 for each 10 minutes of advice. No wonder they're in receivership."

David Silloway, Randolph Center, Vt.: "My 2008 **Chevrolet** 2500 pickup is my worst buy. It had to be jump-started 10 times and the battery was replaced twice. Then the company decided to install a dual battery system at no charge. Hopefully this will make the vehicle work as well as my 2001 Chevy."

Dana L. Ellsworth, Brushton, N.Y.: "My 2004 **New Holland** TC 210 tractor worked great, until at about 900 hours when the starter had to be replaced. I've had 6 starters put on it, by 3 different dealers, in the past 18 months. All the starters had gear noses that were too long which caused them to rub against the flywheel, and then the tractor would stall out. As a result, this tractor has been sitting idle in our yard for almost a year. I'm about ready to scrap it out."

W.H. Bunting, Whitefield, Maine: "I think Gorilla Glue is highly overrated, but **Gorilla Tape** is absolutely wonderful. In fact, last year I gave away 10 of the large-size rolls for Christmas presents. Two years ago I used this tape to 'weld' together various pieces of thin, rusted-out, hard-to-weld sheet metal strippers on a Deere 14T baler. Deere wanted \$70 for new strippers but the tape is still holding fine."

Jack Porter, Goose Creek, S.C.: "My 1991 **Deere** LX178 lawn tractor equipped with a water-cooled engine has worn out 2

mower decks, yet has required only routine maintenance. It still doesn't use any oil.

"My **GM** Envoy XL has more than 92,000 miles on it and is a best buy."

Fred Space, Sussex, N.J.: "I'm 82 years old and I've farmed my whole life. Through the years of hard work I developed a bulged disc in my spine. I went to a spine doctor and got some 'epidural' steroid shots at \$1,200 per treatment. They worked for a few weeks, but then the pain came back. Then a friend told me about an 'inversion table' called **Teter Hang Ups** (ph 800 847-0143; www.teter-inversion.com). You fasten your feet into clamps, and then when you raise your

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arms the unit tips upside down so you hang by your feet. Your spine then stretches so that the bulged disc retreats. I use it 10 min. at a time, twice a day. It has worked like a miracle and completely eliminated my back pain. It cost less than \$400."

Randy Scott, Ottumwa, Iowa: Randy's impressed with his **Deere** 6430 Premium IVT tractor. "When going down the road the tractor automatically drops the engine rpm's while maintaining a constant speed. It saves a lot of fuel.

"My **Case IH** 125 Maxxum Economy tractor had slow hydraulics to start with, and the clutch wouldn't 'feather' when hooking up implements. I had this tractor in the shop twice under warranty. When the warranty expired the tractor went off down the road, never to return."

Hobart Stewart, Republic, Mo.: Hobart's pleased with his **DeWalt** cordless 1/2-in. drill. "We've used this drill to screw on metal roofing and siding, to drill pilot holes, and to extract numerous screws and nuts. The batteries last a long time.

"We've had problems with our **Swisher** 34-ton log splitter. The idler pulley came loose from the shaft and fell off. We were able to find the belt and put it back on. But then as we were bringing the splitter in for repairs to the carburetor, the belt fell off again and we had to buy a new belt and pulley. On the plus side, we haven't found a log this splitter can't handle."

Eugene Cysewski, Courtenay, N. Dak.: "We like our 2009 **Horsch Anderson** PS 6015 no-till grain drill. This is our second Horsch Anderson drill, as we upgraded from a 40-ft. to a 60-ft. model. We've used it to produce good stands of small grains, soybeans and corn, all planted in twin rows. This drill allows one-pass planting with seed and fertilizer.

"We're disappointed with our 2010 **REM** 2700 grain vac, which we bought after an older model wore out. It doesn't have as much capacity as advertised and had mechanical problems, too. After using the machine for a few hours we traded for another brand."

Mark A. Ostwinkle, Maquoketa, Iowa: "My 2004 **Volkswagen** Golf TDI-equipped with a diesel engine and 5-speed transmission gets 42 to 50 mpg. It has about 98,000 miles on it with no problems.

"Two years ago I bought a used 1995 **Ford** F-350 4-WD dump truck equipped with a 7.3-liter diesel engine with about 70,000 miles on it. It's a sharp looking truck with a lot of power. A great buy.

"My 1995 **Ford** F-250 4-WD extended cab pickup started using oil at 35,000 miles. It gets only 9 to 11 mpg, and less when pulling a trailer. Also, the front end requires a lot of

maintenance."

Tom Hartman, Decatur, Ill.: "Our **Stihl** handheld blower and **Stihl** string weed trimmers are best buys. We use them in our lawn business 5 days a week and they work great.

"Our 2005 **Cub Cadet** lawn tractor equipped with a 46-in. mower deck is a worst buy. It's the only tractor we ever bought new. The compression release broke inside the engine with less than 100 hours on it. The deck belt wouldn't stay on and when it fell off, often we would accidentally run over it and ruin it. This tractor spent more time in the shop than in our yard. Finally we sold it 2 years ago with less than 200 hours on it. Now we're using a 1976 **Deere** 212 lawn tractor, which has had only minor problems."

J.L. Davidson, Montgomery City, Mo.: "My 1994 **Ford** Ranger has more than 302,000 miles on it, yet the engine hasn't been touched."

John Collins, Alpine, Texas: "My **Double H** steel-toed cowboy boots are the best work boots I've ever had (ph 800 438-7026; www.doubleboots.com). They broke in easily and are super comfortable. And, they're made in the U.S."

Chuck Virtue, Platteville, Wis.: "Our 2008 **Gehl** 4835 SXT Turbo skid loader is built to handle tough jobs and always starts, even in the coldest weather. We love the Deutz engine - it's very fuel efficient."

Jim Davies, Platteville, Wis.: "I operate a sharpening shop and do a lot of lawn mower blades. After going through 2 **Foley** blade grinders, in 2007 I bought a **Magna Matic** 8000 blade grinder which can be used to sharpen regular blades and also mulching blades. This machine does everything I expected it to. Also, the company is very knowledgeable and helpful.

"My 1996 **Power King** 18 hp Hydro garden tractor is a worst buy. Before the first season of mowing was over I already had trouble with the electric clutch. The dealer stood behind the tractor, but when we finally found out what was wrong the company sent the wrong parts. I still use this tractor to plow snow, but the fiberglass body has cracked and fell apart. Now the body is shot."

S. Sibold, St. Marys, Ohio: "We use wood pellets to heat our home, and last year we bought a new **Glow Boy** stove from Kerns Fireplace in Rockford, Ohio (ph 231 745-6110; www.alternativeheatingandfuel.com). There were a few bugs that needed to be worked out, but the service man took care of them. Then last spring, a fire in the pellet stove climbed the auger and burned into the hopper bin. The dealer was there right away and took the stove to their shop. They had the stove over the summer and part of the fall, then returned it to us. After several days of burning, the stove again caught fire in the auger and spread to the hopper bin.

"Once again, the dealer came to check out the problem. The company called to help and sent us a new, upgraded stove. However, a short time later the stove caught fire again in the auger but this time we caught it before it spread to the hopper. Again, both the dealer and the company were there to provide help. The problem has finally been solved and we love our Glow Boy pellet stove."

Jed Greene, Ft. Smith, Ark.: "Several years ago I began acquiring **Stihl** chainsaws, including a 460, 440 Magnum, and two MS 210 models, and I'm thoroughly satisfied with all of them. They're tough, work hard, have excellent design features, and never let me down. I won't buy another brand.

"My **Shindaiwa** B450 brush cutter has tremendous power for its size, starts with 3 pulls every time, and runs forever on a tank of gas. I can't say enough good things about it."