

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

and now it needs service again. The last 2 washers we had before this one each lasted 20 years. The company won't help pay for repairs."

**Charles McDonald, Inwood, W. Va.:** "My Honda Civic Hybrid gets 45 to 55 mpg and has been trouble-free. It rides and drives comfortably."

**Allen Hickerson, Corsicana, Texas:** "My 2008 Kubota ZD3265-60 riding mower has been trouble-free and has reduced my mowing time by half. It was a big investment but has cost almost nothing to maintain."

"My 2009 Skystream residential wind generator is my worst buy. After a wonderful sales pitch we were convinced this wind turbine would be a great investment. We were told the \$16,000 plus investment would pay

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for itself in 4 to 5 years. However, over the course of 1 year our electric bill has been reduced very little, if any, and the company seems to think everything is okay. There's another catch - the renewable energy plans are higher per kwh compared to a regular electric plan. We're very disappointed - 'going green' has cost us a lot of green."

**John L. Kennedy, Seligman, Ariz.:** "I like my 2009 Arizona Mfg. 12,000-lb. dump trailer. It's 12 ft. long with 3-ft. high sides. I don't haul a lot of stuff any more, but I still need to transport some material in order to maintain my rental properties. My dump truck needed a lot of tender loving care and cost about \$1,000 a year just to put it on the road. By pulling the dump trailer behind my pickup, I'm saving about \$1,000 in license and insurance and can still haul all I need to."

"My 2007 Sears Craftsman ratchet had to be returned several times for repairs. I like Craftsman tools, but their little cheap ratchet sets come with a round headed ratchet that fails about every third use. When I took the ratchet back I found they had a drawer full of them. They gave me a refurbished one but I got only about three uses out of it, and then I had to go back to the store again. I tried to trade up and pay the difference, but they refused."

**Bradford C. Blodgett, Scotland, Ct.:** "I've bought 3 cordless power tools at sales and all 3 were worst buys. Finally I figured out these tools were so cheap because their batteries were old and obsolete, so I sent the batteries to Voltman Batteries to have them rebuilt (ph 877 816-7728; www.voltmanbatteries.com). I should have done the same thing with my other cordless tools while I still had them. If anyone has good cordless tools with worn out, obsolete batteries, try sending the batteries to this company. They provide a great service."

**Francis Henderson, Brinston, Ontario:** Francis is impressed with his 2008 New Holland BB940 big square baler. "We can bale hay fast with it once the hay is ready to bale. We also own a Kuhn 7822 25-ft. hay rake that saves time and is simple to operate. Because it's so wide we can go slower and save a lot of leaves."

"My Great Plains 1205NT 12-ft., no-till grain drill plants 12 ft. wide, but the tires on the outside of the drill make it over 15 ft. wide. If the tires were located behind the drill and in the center, we could plant 15 ft. wide instead of 12 ft. Also, the coulters aren't spaced right and plug up easily in corn stalks or loose ground."

**Vincent Theriault, Salt Spring Island, B.C.:** "It's the most dependable hand tool I've ever owned, and also the toughest," says Vincent about his Paslode gas and battery-operated nailing gun. It's designed to use 2 to 3 1/2-in. nails.

"My 50-ft. wide Howard Rotavator tiller is a best buy. Over the years I've owned two of the company's tillers and have worn them to the core, but I only broke a drive chain once."

"In just a few months, I went through two Makita 3/8-in. drive electric drills while using them to operate hole saws. I used one to cut a 1/4-in. dia. hole in 3/8-in. thick steel, and the other to cut a hole in a 2 by 4. In both cases the hole saw jammed. This company used to make a good drill."

**Gary Scheetz, Parkston, S. Dak.:** "A couple years ago I traded my 4 by 2 Deere Gator, equipped with a single cylinder air-cooled engine, for a new Gator HPX 4-WD model equipped with a 2-cyl. water-cooled engine. When the weather gets cold, say under 20 degrees or so, the HPX pumps raw gas into the crankcase until the engine stops."

"I use my Gator for a lot of short trips around the farm all year long and when the weather is nice, there's no problem. Other Gator owners of the HPX and XUV I've spoken with have had the same problem. The dealer said 'they all do that' and that you have to warm them up and burn it out of the crankcase."

"But that doesn't work. Even if you let the machine run with the engine warmed up, if it's cold out it still pumps raw fuel into the crankcase. I tried running a flexible hose from the air cleaner inlet to take heat off the muffler. That seems to help, but it doesn't solve the problem. Has anyone out there found a cure? My HPX has a Kawasaki engine and a carburetor."

**Al Armstrong, Edmonton, Alberta:** "As far as I'm concerned it's the best weed eater on the market. You can't stop it," says Al about his 2008 Stihl FS250 40 cc weed eater. "I use a diamond-shaped line with it. This weed eater has power to spare and will take down very big weeds. It's equipped with a straight shaft and a neck harness. The controls are located on the shaft. It uses an oil and gas mix and always starts on the first pull."

**Ed Anderson, Littleton, N.C.:** "My best buy is the Best Carpenter Bee Trap sold by Brian Blazer and recently featured in FARM SHOW (ph 256 253-2019; www.carpenterbeesolutions.com). It did an outstanding job of eliminating carpenter bees on our place. The holes in the trap mimic the entrance to a carpenter bee nest, and the bees end up trapped in a plastic soda bottle. No bait or poison is needed. Your story on them was much appreciated."

**Norm Kling, Rudd, Iowa:** "I've found PEN-TR8 Super Strength penetrating oil to be great stuff (Premier Industrial Products; ph 800 554-8123; www.pen-tr8.com)."

**William H. Sobleskey, Cookeville, Tenn.:** "I've used my 1987 Stihl Wood Boss 024 AVS chainsaw to cut most of my firewood, to clear woodlots, and to build a log cabin. This saw starts every time on the second pull and has required only routine maintenance."

"My 2007 Cub Cadet 13 hp snowblower equipped with dual drive tires and a 45-in. clearing width is my worst buy. I bought this snowblower when I lived in northern Michigan. The first winter I had to rebuild the front shoes because they were too small and narrow to support the machine. Instead, the shoes just dug into the snow and the machine wouldn't move. The second winter the machine wouldn't move either forward or backward. The dealer said he had

already worked on 2 or 3 other machines, and that there was a design problem with the driveshaft. To solve the problem he redesigned the driveshaft in his shop. I paid \$2,200 for this snowblower and, after the dealer fixed it, he sold it for me for \$1,300."

**Rupert Matthews, Blacksburg, Va.:** Rupert's "all-time best buy" is his 1973 Simplicity 4040 tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower deck, 3-pt. hitch and 2,000 rpm pto. "I bought this tractor used in 1976 and it still has the original engine and rear tires. The hour meter quit working at about 1,700 hours back in the 1990's. I'd buy a new model if they made one."

**Ron Clark, Ovett, Miss.:** "My Farm Trac 550 DTC 4-WD loader tractor is my best buy. Not only can it plow deep with 4-WD, but land clearing is a cinch. It has power steering which I really like. The tractor's undercarriage is all mounted so there's nothing to snag on stumps. This tractor is also priced right."

**Jim Donald, Woodland, Wash.:** Jim's impressed with his 2008 Valmar 5500 Airflo pull-type fertilizer spreader. "It's accurate and easy to use and has an all stainless steel hopper, with stainless steel used on all surfaces that contact fertilizer. The application rates are easy to change. The spreader also works great for overseeding pastures when equipped with an optional roller set. This machine is well designed and well built."

**Tom Minkstein, Manlius, N.Y.:** "The 2,000-watt inverter I bought at Harbor Freight is my best buy. I direct-wired the inverter to my Bush Hog Trail Hand 4400 utility vehicle and use it to operate any 120-volt tool that I need out in the field. It's faster and easier than dragging out a generator. I just open the hood and plug the tool in. No muss, no fuss."

"I purchase a lot of tools and equipment from Northern Tool and haven't been disappointed yet. The company's sales associates are knowledgeable and always take the time to help. If anything breaks or has to be replaced, they always find a way to help. I highly recommend this company."

**Ken Hoff, Sandusky, Mich.:** A 2008 60 by 120-ft. Morton building rates as Ken's "best buy." "This building has many roof and side skylights and 3 sliding doors that are easy to open and close. We use it every day for hay and machinery storage."

"We like our 3 Kubota tractors - an M4700 model, and loader-equipped M5700 and M7040 models. We also like our 2006 Dodge diesel 2500 Mega cab pickup and 2004 Polaris Ranger 6 by 6."

**Larry Braddock, Leander, Texas:** "It cuts and handles better than any mower I've ever owned," says Larry about his 2009 Hustler zero turn riding mower equipped with a 25 hp Kawasaki engine and 54-in. deck. "It used to take 5 to 6 hours to cut our yard, but now it takes only 3 1/2 hours."

**James L. Bryant, Camden, Ark.:** "I thought I was getting the best pickup on the market when I bought my 2005 Toyota Tundra. Boy, was I wrong," says James. "If I didn't start the engine every 4 or 5 days the battery would go down and I'd have to jump-start it. I drove the pickup back to the dealer, and the shop foreman said the battery had been drained by the accessories and that I should run the pickup every 2 or 3 days just to keep the battery charged. I don't use this pickup every day, and I didn't look forward to jump-starting a brand new pickup. The dealer tried installing a new battery but it didn't help."

"So I called the dealer again, and this time they told me to bring the pickup in and let it

stay overnight which I did. Then they told me the battery had a normal discharge. I told them to install a larger battery in the pickup and they did, which solved the problem. Unfortunately, the warranty had expired and the new battery cost me \$138.90, plus four 82-mile trips to town. I think I should have been reimbursed for the mileage and the cost of the larger battery."

"My best buy is my 1966 International Scout and my 1950 M.T. Deere tractor. Both machines still run good."

**John Sawyer, Llano, Texas:** "I've owned a tool called the Texas Fence Fixer since the early 1980's and it's still working great (ph 866 882-2896; www.texasfencefixer.com). The tool will tighten or take slack out of barbed wire, horse wire, electric wire, net wire and high tensile wire with equal ease. No staples or tie wires are removed and with a little practice, the job can be complete in 30 seconds to a minute. When the tool is removed, the fence remains completely tight."

**Ron Tyczynski, Grand Haven, Mich.:** "My Eaton Roll Cage Compressor is a best buy (ph 937 540-1140; www.eatoncompressor.com). It cost more than \$100 less than comparable 'name brand' compressors. It was still going strong more than 5 years after I bought it when a steel bar fell on it and broke the regulator. The company was helpful in providing advice and parts for the repair. In this day and age when everyone wants to go green, it makes sense to buy equipment that can be rebuilt."

"Last year I bought an Eaton 32 cfm bare pump to build my own compressor for a specialized application. This is an American company with a knowledgeable service staff and they provide excellent service."

"Another American-made product that's a best buy are Blitz gas cans. We operate a lawn mowing business and have at least 10 of these plastic gas cans. They're durable and tolerate occasional abuse, and replacement parts for them are readily available."

**Dave Gunlock, Manor, Texas:** "My experience with 2 Troy Bilt string trimmers has been totally unsatisfactory, as has been the response I received from the company. I have no problem with the 4-cycle engine on these trimmers. But I have a big problem with the new-style cutting head. It must have been designed by someone who had never used a string trimmer. Restringing the trimmer is fairly easy to do. The problem is the head won't hold the new string; it keeps feeding the string without bumping the head until it throws all the string out."

"When this problem happened with the first trimmer, I took it back to the dealer because I thought it was just a bad unit and they replaced it. But the same problem happened with the second trimmer. It's just poorly designed. I have an older Troy Bilt straight shaft trimmer that's a little harder to restring, but it works fine and doesn't throw the string off."

"On the best buy side, I'm happy with my 2002 Kubota L3010 tractor equipped with a front-end loader. This tractor now has more than 700 hours on it with no problems. I put a lot of hours on this tractor digging and hauling gravel, dirt, compost, mulch and doing other chores using a bush hog and box blade."

"My 1995 EZ-GO electric golf cart is equipped with a high lift suspension and balloon tires. We use this golf cart as a utility vehicle to haul tools and for stringing barbed wire. It has saved me many miles of walking and hauling tools around our place. No problems. It's definitely a best buy."