

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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Jeff Weller, Dunnellon, Florida: Jeff's impressed with his **Domino** garage door opener keypad entry system (ph 800 736-6466; www.dominoengineering.com). "We use the door opener keypads on four roll-up doors on our farm and they work great. The keypads are easy to program and are backlit for night use. It's an awesome product. Ever since we installed them we don't bother using the factory door buttons or switches. The company's customer service is outstanding. They trouble shoot the problem with you on the phone and will promptly send a replacement if it's needed."

He's unhappy with his **Priefert** Wire D gates. "We have more than 50 of these gates on our property. All of them are less than 2 1/2 years old and many are less than 1 1/2 years old. Yet all of them are rusting, some so bad the wire is actually spalling and flying off in pieces.

"I sent some photos to the company, but instead of stepping up and replacing the gates, they sent me some touch-up paint. I refused the shipment and will be filing online complaints to make others aware of my experience with this company. We'll have to take the gates down and try to sandblast them and paint them with a proper rust inhibitor like Rust Bullet - or we'll just donate the gates to our local horse rescue organization. This is the kind of experience I'd expect from some made-in-China junk, not an American-made product. Where is the pride?"

Rick Mabeus, Winfield, Iowa: "My best buy is my 2003 **Multiton** walkie/stacker unit - a walk-behind, battery-powered forklift that I bought used three years ago (ph 804 737-7400; www.jungheinrich-us.com). It's surprising how much it'll lift. We use it every day to assemble new equipment in my shop. It'll go 28 days on a single charge and is balanced and very stable when it lifts. I've made several attachments for it.

"I'm disappointed with my **Berlon** skid steer loader attachment called the Forkster. It's a forklift attachment to help carry more



weight without putting the skid loader on its nose. However, when you try to lift with it, the dolly tires flatten and I can't even move the unit. It might work with a larger skid loader. The stands that it sets on when it's self-standing also drag whenever I try to use the unit. To me it's just a high-priced boat anchor. But I've used other attachments built by this company with no problems."

Keith Gerweck, Falls City, Neb.: "My 1996 **Dodge** diesel pickup is the best pickup I've ever owned. It has more than 166,000 miles on it, and I expect a lot more as long as I take good care of it.

"My 1990 **IH** Magnum 7110 tractor is my worst buy. The differential went out twice. A tractor salvage company says that if I install the differential out of a Case IH Magnum 8910 I can still use the tractor's original ring gear and pinion. The differential out of the Magnum 8910 is heavier built, but it costs \$300 more than the standard differential."

Bill Mobley, Hubbard, Texas: "The 10-ton manually-operated log splitter I bought from **Northern Tool** is my worst buy. It has a 2-speed pump that builds up to 10 tons of pressure and operates by using two steel handles. However, it won't split logs."

John Dickinson, Port Orange, Florida:

"My 1994 **Onan** Marquis generator set, which I bought used 2 1/2 years ago, is my worst buy. I've taken it to two different repair shops and spent more than \$4,000 on parts and labor, but they can't find the problem. It won't deliver the correct voltage. It seems that dampness may affect it because on hot, sunny days it works better, but not all the time. Both the stator and voltage regulator were replaced but it didn't help."

Rob Pritchard, Calgary, Alberta: "My **Husqvarna** 372 chainsaw has a 20-in. bar so it's big enough for large trees. It's a heavy saw but I can use it for hours without getting too tired. It always starts whether it's cold or hot outside."

Billy M. Gilmore, III, Poplarville, Miss.: A 2007 **Woodmizer** 21-ft. sawmill equipped with a 25 hp Kohler engine rates as Billy's "best buy". "It performs fantastic and is the best piece of equipment I've ever bought. I used it last September while building a house to cut 16,000 board feet and saved thousands of dollars. It's manually operated but that's okay because it's fun to use."

Everit Newberry, Richland Center, Wis.: "I like my **McFarlane** 3-pt. mounted, 14-ft. flexible drag. It follows the ground contour and works great for on pastures."

Andy Gheen, Athol, N.Y.: "My **Thermal Engine Corp.** wood stove fan is powered by a Sterling engine, which means the heat of the stove itself powers it (ph 256 772-8781). This fan is American-made and does an outstanding job. Whenever I call the company, real people answer the phone and actually listen to my comments or questions. This fan has increased my wood stove's efficiency by at least 30 percent with its quiet and reliable air circulation."



William Paulson, Foam Lake, Sask.: "**Degelman Industries** and **Borgault Mfg.** are two Saskatchewan companies that build machinery that's sturdy and they provide good warranties."

Alan M. Tierney, Capron, Ill.: "In 2000 my brother Daryl and I bought a **Caterpillar** 246Turbo A Series skid loader. It's equipped with a cab and heater but the heater has never worked. At 238 hours the right side hydraulic motor went out. At 1,555 hours the oil pump housing broke off, ruining the motor. The company wanted \$20,000 to repair it, but after three months of fighting we ended up paying \$4,753 for the repairs.

"My brother and I are the only ones who operate this machine so it's not abused. It's powered by a poorly designed Perkins/Caterpillar diesel engine. After 8 years of use and with only a little more than 3,000 hours on it, I'm not impressed. Not with an industrial piece of equipment doing hobby farm work. So much for Caterpillar dependability and resale."

Alan Auerbach, Waterloo, Ontario: "I use an **Elec-Trac** electric mower and snowblower that just keeps humming along (as long as I install new batteries every 6 to 8 years). I bought the tractor in 1972, the year GE discontinued making them."

Elmer Pinkerton, Elmwood, Neb.: "I'm fascinated with the **Segway**, which is an innovative two-wheeled electric standup scooter. I bought one from a dealer in Omaha and was supposed to get it in two weeks.

"Two weeks passed with nothing to show so I called the dealer. He had no idea what was going on. I told him I'm 83 years old

Roger Gutschmidt uses his **HU-LIFT Mobile Drum Carrier** to empty 55 and 30-gal. barrels of herbicide or oil in his shop. Handle is used to lift barrel about 6 in. off floor so it can be tipped horizontally.



Roger Gutschmidt, Gackle, N. Dak.: "I really love the barrel stand I bought for emptying 55 and 30-gal. barrels. It makes it easy to handle heavy barrels of herbicide or oil in the shop. I've used it on barrels weighing as much as 1,000 lbs. and it was effortless. It's called a **HU-LIFT** Mobile Drum Carrier and I bought it from Fastenal (www.Fastenal.com; 507-454-5379). You just wheel it up against a barrel and ratchet a belt tightly around it. Then you use the handle to lift the barrel about 6 in. off the floor so you can tip it horizontally. When it's empty and you want to clean it, you can even swing the barrel

around 360 degrees to slosh rinse water around.

"The barrel stand costs \$442. I installed a brass valve in the bottom bung so I can shut off the flow quickly. On the top bung, I devised a system to pressurize the container. I drilled a 5/8-in. hole in the center of the top bung cover to accept a tire valve stem. I've used this idea in barrel bungs for over 30 years, and have never had any problems. You do have to be a little careful not to over-pressurize the barrel, especially if it's made of plastic, or it could burst, and then you would have a big mess."

Brass valve installed in bottom bung allows Gutschmidt to shut off the flow quickly. On top bung he devised a system to pressurize the container, drilling a 5/8-in. hole in center of bung cover to accept a tire valve stem.



and don't even buy green bananas any more. He returned my money.

"I wrote to the factory but got no response. It may be a fine machine but the company is too disorganized. What if you needed service?"

Victor Daniels, Arenac County, Mich. ph 989 654-2425: Victor likes his **Vink** Cow Lift, which allows dairymen to get downed cows back on their feet. However, he saw the need for something that would allow a cow to turn around once she has been lifted. So he modified it by adding a swivel.

"Once she's on her feet the cow can turn around. Also, the swivel helps the cow to



walk with a natural rotating action to another location where she can have time to recover. "This lift has worked well every time I've used it," says Daniels.

The device won the 2008 Michigan Farm Bureau invention award.

Walter D. Graham, Pella, Iowa: "My 2006 **Stihl** chainsaw is my best buy. I've used other Stihl chainsaws and like how they perform. This one really has a lot of power. No problems.

"I always had trouble getting my 2000 **Homelite** chainsaw started, and the chain oiler didn't work half the time. Also, this saw didn't have as much power as I expected."

Brad Cole, Skaneateles, N.Y.: "My **Kubota** B2910 compact tractor has a lot of

power and is economical to operate. It's extremely reliable and always starts, even in cold weather.

"My **Husqvarna** 18-in. chainsaw is my worst buy. After using it for less than two years and cutting no more than 40 face cords of firewood, the saw wouldn't run at full rpm's. It would just lose power and stall. I took the saw back to the dealer who rebuilt the carburetor, but it didn't help. Another dealer told me the problem was spun bearings and that the saw wasn't worth repairing."

Lewis Klejeski, Cloquet, Minn.: "It has more than 138,000 miles on it but still runs like a clock," reports Lewis about his 1992 **Dodge** Dakota 4-WD pickup equipped with a V-6 engine. "I've never had any problems with the 4-WD even though I've often driven in 4-WD at freeway speeds. I drive on gravel and salted roads every winter but it has no rust."

William Thompson, Williston, N. Dak.: "My 2007 **EZ** Hoe tiller/cultivator is my worst buy. It worked alright for one year but the next year I couldn't get it started. I ended up having to replace the carburetor. We're garden growers for a local farmer's market, and this problem put us about two weeks behind schedule."

Jim Rymut, North Royalton, Ohio: Jim likes the 2007 electric chainsaw sharpener he bought from **Harbor Freight**. "I already had a much better chainsaw sharpener that I bought 20 years ago for hundreds of dollars. However, I would have to sharpen a mountain of chains in order to justify buying one of those machines again. This sharpener is lightweight and easy to use, and I paid only \$29 for it. It paid for itself after sharpening only a few chains.

"I'm not happy with the 2,000-lb. Chicago electric utility winch I bought from **Harbor Freight**. I needed help getting my riding