

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

mower up the ramps to my pickup. I mounted the winch in the pickup bed and mounted the remote control at the rear bumper, so I could watch as the mower was pulled up. However, the winch couldn't pull it up even though it's rated at 2,000 lbs. So I'm still pushing the mower up the ramps by hand."

**Stephen Wilhelm, Custer, Ohio:** "My 1998 and 2004 Dodge 3500 pickups are both equipped with Cummins engines and work great for all our towing jobs."

"My 1966 Ford 4000 is a handy tractor. I use it to bale and cut hay, to grind feed, and to plant crops. Very few problems."

**Glenn Thompson, Fredericksburg, Texas:** "I like my 2007 Remington 8-ft. electric telescoping pole saw equipped with a 10-in. chain saw. I've used it to prune dozens of trees, most of them oaks. It has amazing durability and performance for an inexpensive saw."

**M. Lien, Gonvick, Minn.:** "My 2007 Dell 8250 computer has been trouble-free."

"My 2008 Ryobi 18-volt cordless tool set works well. The lithium batteries hold a charge and also recharge quickly, and the controls are user friendly."

"My 2007 Suzuki King Quad 700 4-wheeler has been nothing but trouble. At 100 miles the ring gear broke, locking up the rear tires at 60 mph. The front differential has broken twice, leaving the machine without 4-WD, and now a rear seal is leaking. This machine won't start if the temperature goes below zero or if it sits for more than two or three days. The rig's side panels make it difficult to check the oil or change it. It now has about 1,500 miles on it, and I figure it has cost me about a dollar per mile to keep this

**"This machine won't start if the temperature goes below zero."**

machine on the road. That's not very impressive for a \$7,500 machine."

**Clayton Bortrager, Kalona, Iowa:** "It's a fuel efficient tractor that's easy to maintain, and parts for it are relatively inexpensive," says Clayton, impressed with his 1985 Deutz Allis 6265. "It has a lot of lugging power and starts easy in cold weather. We've tried six other tractor brands in the past, but this one is the best yet."

"We've had trouble with the hydraulics on our mid 1960's Deere 4010 diesel tractor, which we bought used. The tractor was taken to a couple of different mechanics where it racked up big bills, but it seems those repairs didn't fix the problem."

"This tractor was supposed to be rebuilt when we bought it, but in cold weather it takes a big can of ether to start it. Or, we have to pull it 3/4 of a mile down the road before it'll start. It seems there's just not a big enough battery available on the market for what it needs to start. Also, parts for this tractor are expensive and complicated."

**Raymond J. Gingerich, Mylo, N. Dak.:** "My 2009 Honda 420 Rancher ATV equipped with an automatic transmission and independent suspension is my best buy. Over the years I've had a lot of ATV's, but I can't seem to wear this one out. It just goes and goes. It handles nice and rides great."

"My Ruger pistol is accurate, jam-proof, and fun to shoot."

"My Mosquito Motel mosquito trap is my worst buy. Flying insects are attracted to the unit by its ultraviolet lights and the carbon dioxide produced by light hitting titanium

oxide-coated panels. When insects enter the unit, a quiet fan pushes them down into a capture net at the bottom where they dehydrate and die. However, I was able to use the trap less than a month before both of the light bulbs on it burned out. They're expensive to replace."

**Russell S. Smith, Waco, Texas:** "My 1991 Dodge 2500 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine just keeps going and going, as does my 1952 Ford 8N tractor. I also like my Drill Doctor drill bit sharpener. It works great and saves money, too."

"My 2002 Deere L100 42-in. riding mower equipped with a 17 1/2 hp engine quit starting without help after one season of use. The dealer said the compression release had broken so they replaced the engine at no charge, but they also billed me \$80 for cleaning, greasing, and leveling the mower deck. The engine started okay for a couple of years but now it's having problems again. I won't buy another Deere riding mower."

**John Ebel, Custer, Wis.:** "My Stihl .026 chainsaw wore out after 25 years of use, so I bought a Stihl Farm Boss and couldn't be happier with it. This saw always starts right up and has plenty of power. If it lasts as long as my other model, it'll probably be the last saw I'll ever buy."

He's disappointed with his Grizzly 18-volt cordless drill equipped with a 1/2-in. chuck. "After about four months of light use the clutch started slipping, and then about two months later it quit working entirely. I guess you get what you pay for."

**Stan F. Gruver, Hutchinson, Kansas:** Stan's the owner of a Sears Craftsman 19.2-volt cordless drill. "I'm satisfied with the drill but not the friction chuck on it. The only way I can keep the drill bit from slipping is to put a band wrench on the chuck. The next time I get one of these drills I'm taking the chuck off and replacing it with a Jacobs chuck with key."

**Brent Arthur John Priest, Grenfell, Sask.:** "Our 1971 Deere 4320 tractor has almost 9,400 hours but still works great. We use it to pull 50 ft. of harrows in the spring, a job that it handles with ease. It's also easy on fuel. This tractor was rolled once but we straightened out the cab and it has worked fine ever since. It's the best tractor on our farm."

**Don Jensen, Mankato, Minn.:** A 2004 Dodge 2500 heavy duty 4-WD Quad Cab pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine rates as Don's "best buy". "It has more than 95,000 miles on it and we couldn't be happier with it. We bought a new set of tires at about 72,000 miles, but even including that cost we haven't spent \$800 on this pickup. It averages 18 to 25 mpg. I think this is Dodge's best pickup."

**Dexter Brahm, Ionia, Iowa:** Dexter isn't happy with the 117-piece tool set he bought from Sears. "Whenever I pick up the case, half the tools fall to the bottom tray. I tried to return it but was told the case wasn't covered under the company's 'return or replace' policy. It's probably the last product I'll buy from Sears."

**Alan Davis, New Florence, Penn.:** "I use my 1968 Deere STX 38-in. riding mower to cut my own lawn as well as a 2-acre church lawn. It's well made. No complaints."

"The winch I bought from Northern Tool was supposed to pull two tons, but it didn't last a month. We were only using it to skid trees from 4 to 6 in. in diameter."

**Chester W. Claycomb, Imler, Penn.:** Chester likes his Sears Craftsman 19-volt rechargeable drill. "It has a lot of power and lasts a long time because of the two power packs that come with it. Also, it stores in a

nice case. I'd recommend this drill to anyone."

The pickup bed-mounted crane lift he bought from Harbor Freight rates as his "worst buy". "This crane is rated at 1,000 lbs. but the mounting system leaves a lot to be desired. It pulled the bolts right out of the pickup bed. I had to put a 3/4-in. thick steel plate under the lift, bolted and welded in place. Pickup beds are too thin to support a crane lifting that much weight."

**Bill Smith, Moulton, Ala.:** "This tractor is comfortable and easy to operate," says Bill about his 2003 Landini 4-WD. "It's rated at 85 pto hp but tested at 96 hp on our dealer's dynamometer. We use this tractor mostly to make hay, but it performs equally well for tillage and other operations. It uses less fuel than other tractors with half as much power. I've bought several new tractors over the past 20 years, but this one is special."

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On the "worst buy" side, he lists his large 2006 Husqvarna backpack leaf blower. "A connecting rod broke within the first hour of use so the dealer gave us a replacement unit. However, we were able to use it for only about two weeks before the same problem happened again even though we were using the correct gas/oil mix. Normally this is a reliable brand of equipment - I just got a couple of units that somehow got by the quality controls."

**Paul Heck, Mondovi, Wis.:** "My 1995 Case IH 7230 Magnum front wheel drive assist tractor has had only two breakdowns in 4,400 hours. One problem was with a transmission hydraulic pressure sending unit, and the other was with the fan belt."

**Mark A. Miller, Belvidere, Tenn.:** "I like my Hardy 120,000 btu outdoor boiler. I've had to replace a few things but I still like this outdoor boiler. The nice thing is the mess stays outside instead of inside the house."

**D. Lemar Johnson, Excelsior Springs, Mo.:** "I like my 1978 Kubota 278 utility tractor. No problems. I use it for mowing, raking, dirt work, and general farm chores."

**Kathy Edelman, Solway, Minn.:** Kathy nominates her 2001 Bobcat 773 skid loader equipped with a Kubota diesel engine as her "best buy". "I use it every day all winter long. I plug it in at night and it never fails to start. I use it every day for feeding hay and regularly for plowing snow, cleaning the barn and other odd jobs."

"My 2000 Chevy Silverado 'cab and a half' 3/4-ton pickup is my worst buy. It has never been as fuel efficient as we were told it would be, and it lacks power."

**Roman M. Kulzer, Sauk Centre, Minn.:** "My worst buy was a hydrogen gas cell called the ER Hyzor that I bought from Eagle Research. The idea is to make hydrogen gas with an onboard electrolysis unit to boost mileage. The company's advertising makes it seem like you can easily expect a reasonable increase in fuel efficiency. However, after using it for several months in my car I have yet to see any improvement. In fact, I feel it has actually decreased fuel efficiency. The \$500 I spent on it was a total loss."

**Bob Schelling, Marshalltown, Iowa:** "Bob's pleased with his 2006 Kubota L3430 tractor equipped with an LA723 quick-tach loader, and with his 2007 Kubota RTV 900 utility vehicle. "I've used the tractor hard yet

it has performed amazingly well. There are a couple of things I don't like about the RTV 900. It doesn't go fast enough, and it stops too suddenly when I let up on the accelerator. However, it runs super cheap."

**Gene Exum, Brooksville, Florida:** A 2007 New Holland TT45 tractor equipped with a front-end loader rates as Gene's "best buy". "I'm a disabled vet so I appreciate a tractor that's easy to get on and that has a comfortable work space. All the controls are easy to operate and conveniently located, and fuel efficiency is outstanding. I'm completely satisfied with this tractor."

"My 2003 Bush Hog 4-ft. mower is my worst buy. I used it the first year to cut heavy pasture for about 30 hours. Then I had health problems and the machine sat in the barn until last summer, when I tried to use it to cut some light underbrush that was less than 3/8 in. in diameter. The driveshaft got badly bent. I'm disappointed in this mower. I have a Bush Hog finish mower that I've used for more than 20 years."

**Larry Nolf, Lakeview, Mich.:** Larry's disappointed with his Pellet Pro's pellet mill. "I bought this farm-sized pellet-making mill last December. I had hoped to start up a pellet-making business and put 8 to 12 machines to work."

"After I bought the mill I waited for the company to send a moisture tester, but I got tired of waiting and started the machine up in January. Apparently the moisture content of the material I used was too high and as a result I was unable to produce anything. Two weeks later four bolts between the gearbox and milling side of the machine failed. Finally, I got the moisture tester and used material with the proper moisture content, but the machine still didn't work well."

"Then in March the motor went bad and blew some capacitors. The company sent new ones. The company says the machine is capable of producing 200 to 400 lbs. of pellets per hour but I get less than 100 lbs."

"I called the company and asked for a refund, but their best offer was to take the machine back and try to sell it for me. And I would have to deliver the machine to them in Illinois - a round trip drive of about 16 hours. I think I should have received a complete refund. This issue still is not resolved."

**Dan Rhodes, Myerstown, Penn.:** "I really like my Milwaukee impact wrench powered by a lithium ion battery. It has terrific torque. I keep it with me when on the road in case of a flat tire. I also use it for setting up farm equipment and for general repair work."

"We use our Dodge pickups equipped with Cummins diesel engines to pull heavy loads in our business. These pickups are powerful with excellent fuel efficiency."

**Keith Fravel, Cresco, Iowa:** "My worst buy recently was an Edenpure infrared heater. I set it up in my living room, but I didn't notice a bit of difference. So one afternoon I put the heater in our smallest bedroom, along with a thermometer, and closed the door. The next day I checked to find the temperature hadn't changed a bit, so I boxed the heater up and sent it back. I had to pay for the shipping and handling. I had to make a number of phone calls before I eventually got my money back."

**Steve Derrick of Omaha, Texas:** When gas reached \$4 a gallon last summer, Steve bought two scooters over the internet from All Sports in Newton, Kansas. "When I bought the scooters I also purchased a lifetime warranty for them. When the scooters were delivered there were some damaged parts, so I was told to mail photos and parts numbers so I could get replacements. More than six months have gone by now but nothing has been replaced."