

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

By: Mark Newhall
Editor

Bill Gergen
Senior Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use
the survey form on our website at
www.FARMSHOW.com,
or E-mail your comments to:
Editor@FARMSHOW.com**

Robert D’Amato, Morris, New York: “In June, 2007 I bought a **Bixby** corn stove for \$4,800 from a local dealer who said it was state-of-the-art. Just hit the start button and it would provide clean, cheap heat in 10 min. But when we started using it last November, we got a strong popcorn smell and lots of smoke, but no heat. The dealer said to clean it out and try again. It didn’t help so I removed the corn baffle and disconnected the burn pot. I used a 1/8-in. drill bit to clean out dozens of holes in the grate. Put it all back together and had the same problem.

“The dealer said my corn must be bad. I changed corn and had the same results. I finally called the company direct and they suggested some adjustments inside the stove to regulate feed and exhaust. At last we got a little heat but not nearly the 5,000 btu’s it’s rated for. We used it until March, when the burn pot began to fill so fast it would smother the fire and fill the room with smoke. I got through the rest of the heating season by turning the stove on and off manually, even though this is supposedly a computer-controlled stove. We could not leave the house with the stove running.

“I tried the dealer one more time and he suggested burning wood pellets. Same result.”

is fuel efficient.”

A **Stanley-Bostitch** 3 1/2-in. framing nail gun rates as his “worst buy”. “After going through just 8 to 10 boxes of nails the gun started jamming up. I took it back to Home Depot while it was still under warranty and they sent it to an authorized Bostitch repair shop, which said the O-rings were worn out and weren’t covered by warranty. I called the company’s helpline, but the representative would only say ‘we’re sorry’. An O-ring kit to solve the problem sells for \$45, and there’s also a \$40 labor charge to install it.”

Elias Nyberg, Stow, Mass.: Elias isn’t happy with a **Vitalus** water filtration system. They advertise a **Metalmaster** model to handle heavy metals and iron in drinking water. The system worked for about two weeks, then tremendous iron buildup occurred and within weeks everyone’s hair was bright red. All our dishes and the dishwasher turned a reddish brown. The sinks were stained and every water jug and pan in our house was destroyed, not to mention all the white clothes which had to be thrown away.

“The company refused to acknowledge anything was wrong and tried to derail making any refund by saying our system was installed incorrectly, even though I had a plumber and water specialist check out the operation when it failed. After months of fighting with them - and they had my returned merchandise - the company refunded only a small portion of the original cost. I wouldn’t recommend this product to anyone.”

Carl Gustafson, North Brookfield, Mass.: A used **Woodmizer** sawmill rates as Carl’s “best buy”. “I used it recently to saw a couple of 14-ft. hardwood planks to repair my hog loading pen. The company has a great customer service department and a great parts inventory. Their sharpening service checks out the blades, sharpens them and returns them, usually in about one week. I also use the mill for custom sawing for other people as time permits.”

Jim Dunn, Jefferson, Mass.: Jim nominates his **Husqvarna** zero turn riding mower as his “worst buy”. “This mower is almost useless on my hilly lawn and won’t hold a slope of more than about five degrees. Worse yet, if I don’t go super slow, the uphill drive wheel will lose traction and the machine will go downhill out of control. The mulching kit clogs constantly, and the mower does a poor job in high grass no matter how slow I go. I was better off with my 35-year-old Simplicity lawn tractor.”

Jeff Redsicker, Spencer, N.Y.: “I’ve owned and operated **Echo** chain saws for more than 32 years for our sawmill and firewood business. They’re the best saws we’ve ever used. One time we accidentally ran a tractor wheel over a saw, but it was no problem. We just replaced the handle and put the saw back to work. In all these years we’ve never had an engine failure.”

Denis Kehrer, Virden, Ill.: “We bought our 2005 **Deere** G110 riding mower after we moved to a farm house on three acres.

“The G110 has a 12-in. wider cut than our old Deere 160 and is supposed to have more than twice as much power. However, the first thing we noticed was that it didn’t cut any more efficiently and bogged down almost as often as the old machine. The second time I used it in heavy grass, the plastic discharge chute broke off when one of the 1/2-in. tabs on the molded chute tore off due to the stress of pushing through heavy 7-in. grass. On the way back to the machine shed, the hood fell completely off and now has to be held on with a bungee cord. Also, the ground clearance on this machine is so poor it gets stuck nearly every time we use it. We then have to get a truck to pull it loose because it’s not possible to simply dismount and put the machine in gear due to safety devices.

Tommy Scott, Albuquerque, New Mexico:

“I have a possible solution for the Colorado reader in your last issue who had a problem with his **Paloma** tankless water heater. We bought one two years ago and it would also shut down unexpectedly. I did some research on the failure codes and found that I needed to buy a ‘high altitude’ module which is needed for altitudes close to or over 5,000 ft. Albuquerque is at 6,000 ft. so I ordered a module online and the heater has worked great ever since. We can run both showers, the washing machine and the dishwasher with no problem.”

Tom Gullion, Hamilton, Iowa: He’s disappointed with his **Kodiak** work boots. “They came apart between the heel and the sole. The boots are over a year old but had hardly been worn. I wouldn’t complain except that these boots cost \$130 so you expect a lot more. I have a friend with two pairs who had the same problem. When we contacted the company, they said if you don’t have a receipt, they’re not interested in hearing from you. So much for customer service. I’m going back to \$30 boots from Walmart which last a lot longer than Kodiak boots.”

Dave Gorrell, Brookville, Kansas: “My **Kubota** M-105 tractor starts great in cold weather, has a lot of power, and is fuel efficient. I’d recommend this tractor to anyone.”

Larry Genge, Glovertown, New Foundland: Larry likes his 1985 **Kubota** B6100 tractor that he bought used with 858 hours. “We use this tractor for landscaping work, log handling, and snow clearing with homemade attachments that include a bucket, forks, and blade. This tractor starts well in cold weather, requires little maintenance, and