

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Dan Stirewalt, Prineville, Oregon: “I bought an add-on power steering kit, which is a great product, from **Jackson Power Steering** (www.jacksonpowersteering.com; ph 620 357-6546). It took a while to get it because I understand the owner was in the process of setting up a new facility. But once I installed it on my International 350 utility tractor, I was able to pick up 1,800 lbs. with the loader and turn the steering wheel with one finger. It’s a well-engineered product. The only hitch I had was that the left cylin-

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
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the survey form on our website at
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der had a 5/8-in. dia. mounting hole and I had to drill it out to 3/4 in. Otherwise, it was relatively easy to install.”

Beth Hartronft, Houston, Texas: “My worst buy ever was a **Redman** standup wheelchair. When I first stood up, the chair fell forward and I almost went flat on my face. It was a good thing I was buckled in. The company wanted an additional \$4,100 to repair the new wheelchair. I couldn’t afford the expense so I put the chair in the closet where it remains. I’ve offered to give it away but no one wanted it because of the danger. The salesman that I bought the chair from preyed on my need to stand for health reasons, but the chair was nothing like he described.”

Richard Helming, Warrens, Wis.: “My worst buy is a 60 by 81-ft. **Stern** pole building. When it was finished, it had the following problems: Cupola not level and missing weathervane; waves and bulges over most of the building; steel sheet overlap in some areas; nail holes left in roof; corner trims crooked; muddy footprints on sidewalls.

“We contacted the company headquarters in Melrose, Wis., about the shabby construction but they wouldn’t answer my calls or letters.”

Alain Jubinville, Saint Paul, Alberta: “My 1986 **Chevrolet Astro** minivan is awesome. For more than 20 years I’ve used it to deliver potatoes and carrots to market with no problems, and I still use it on our farm. I replaced the tires, headlights, starter, alternator, water pump, fuel pump and a few batteries and windshield wipers. This van has almost 400,000 miles on it yet the engine, transmission, and rear end have never been touched. It gets 25 to 27 mpg and handles really well. The only weak points were the door handles, which broke easily.

“In 2006 I bought a similar used van, a

1994 **GMC Safari**, with about 100,000 miles for \$3,500. I’ve delivered two crops with it, and now it has more than 200,000 miles with no problems. Over the years my total investment for both vehicles has been \$20,500, which means my operating cost per year has been a little less than \$1,000.”

Dale Sargent, Janesville, Minn.: “I bought a **Deere 4720** tractor last December. After I accepted delivery I noticed the hood had numerous dimples on it. I contacted the dealer about my disappointment and they said I’m the only customer who’s ever complained about it. But I later found out numerous tractors have had this problem since April of 2006. Anyone who has a Deere tractor with this problem should complain about it.”

Darrell Sullivan, Waterloo, Wis.: “My **Drill Doctor 500 SPX** drill bit sharpener didn’t live up to the company’s advertising claims. No matter how hard I try, I can’t get it to sharpen drill bits. I’ve tried, a friend has tried and also my grandsons, but with no luck. Buying it was a waste of time and money.”

Donald Schel, Elk Mound, Wis.: “I like my **Kubota M-120 4-WD** tractor and **Kubota RTV 900 4-wheeler** utility vehicle. Both machines are fuel efficient. I put 100 hours on the RTV while using less than 25 gallons of fuel. Both machines are easy to drive. They work a lot better than the **Deere 4020** tractor and **Deere Gator** utility vehicle that I previously owned.”

Roger Irvin, Magnolia, Ky.: “My **Mahindra 7010** tractor equipped with a cab and front-end loader does everything the dealer said it would do. I’m well pleased with it.”

Dolphus Taylor, Waynesburg, Ky.: “My 1983 **New Holland 472** haybine works good and has been almost maintenance-free.

“My 1983 **Claas 44-S** round baler works good. I paid less than \$500 for it. I use both the haybine and baler to make 700 to 800 bales per year.”

Jack Landis, Lancaster, Penn.: “It performs well and is comfortable to handle,” says Jack, pleased with his **Stihl E-85** leaf blower vac.

James Dailey, Youngsville, Penn.: “My 2007 **Kubota L5240 52 hp, 4-WD** diesel tractor equipped with a hydrostatic transmission and front-end loader with quick-tach forks and bucket is my best buy. I call it my ‘skid steer tractor’, because of the instant foot pedal forward and reverse and the ease of operation and quick hydraulics. We use it on our small farm and to load the two **Woodmizer** bandsaw mills that my son and I operate. Both mills are powered by **Kubota** diesel engines. One engine has more than 4,600 hours on it with no problems.”



Art Hertz, Fairfax, S. Dak.: Art liked his **Stumpster** tree cutter so much he became a dealer (The Stumpster Co., 7200 Long Drive, Houston, Texas 77087 ph 713 644-3393; www.stumpster.com). “It’s a 3-pt. mounted, pto-driven unit with a blade that rotates at 1,100 rpm’s. The company makes two models and they’re both designed to cut trees off below ground level without leaving stumps. Over the years I’ve taken this saw to a lot of demonstrations where there were much higher priced tree cutters. As soon as I get