

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

engineering on this mill is clever. Except for the compressor at the top pivot, the entire mill is made from heavy gauge galvanized sheet metal.

"However, it was the most aggravating assembly job I've ever done. The holes don't quite line up, so the instructions tell you to use a tapered punch to force alignment. There are no star washers, so you have to hold both ends of the bolt through the entire tightening process. Some of the bolts are located where you can't get a socket wrench on them, so the whole process has to be done with an open end wrench, making 1/6 of a turn at a time.

"The metal edges are sharp enough that when I was done putting it together (it took about two days) my hands were really beat up with small cuts and scrapes.

"I wrote to the company about these problems, spelling out in detail what was wrong and what I thought they could do to fix it. They never replied."

Paul D. Hostetler, Tampico, Ill.: "My 1997 Deere 8400 tractor has plenty of power, handles well, and rides nice."

James A. Murdock, Whitewater, Montana: James nominates his 2004 Deere 6715 4-WD tractor equipped with a 740 Classic loader and grapple fork as his "best buy". "This is the first new loader tractor I've ever bought. I use it with a Haybuster bale processor to feed cows, and with a New Holland 788 round baler. It's one of the most comfortable tractors I've ever operated. It has a heated cab which is really nice in winter."

Norm Benson, Garrettsville, Tenn.: "The 1952 Farmall Super M I bought in 1966 is the best tractor I've ever owned. I had to replace the engine head about 10 years after buying the tractor. It hasn't required any other major engine or transmission work. The Hobbs engine hour meter on it quit working at 17,750 hours, but I estimate that it now has about 19,000 hours. It has been painted twice so it still looks great. I use it with a Dual front-end loader most of the time."

William G. Wentz, Jr., Goodlettsville, Tenn.: A 2006 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 extended cab pickup rates as William's "worst buy". "At 4,200 miles the transmission had to be replaced, and the new one had to be repaired soon afterward. Then the company had a factory recall for the calibration of ethanol, which lowered the fuel efficiency

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to only 9.6 mpg in town. The pickup is still under warranty so I've scheduled another 're-calibration'. This is the last GM vehicle I'll ever buy."

Gary Gunderson, Elkhorn, Wis.: Gary likes his Case 1845C skid steer loader. "We've done a lot of hard work with this machine, using it with a bucket, forks, and boom, but it never lets us down. It has plenty of power and always starts, even in the coldest weather."

Solon R. Etheredge, Jr., Leighton, Alabama: Solon uses his Kubota 8200 4-WD loader tractor in his haying operation. "My only complaint is that the fuel filter is hard to change because the loader frame is in the way. I think Kubota makes great machines. I also own a Kubota L-2250 4-WD loader tractor, a Kubota riding mower, and a Kubota RTV 900. No problems with any of them."

Grady H. Peay, Springfield, Tenn.: "My 2005 Dodge 3500 Laramie dually pickup equipped with a diesel engine is my worst

buy. It has repeatedly gone back to the service department ever since I bought it. This pickup doesn't have any get-up-and-go power. Last year we went on two long trips and I didn't think we were going to make it back home. The pickup would quit and then run again."

Ken Sachs, Antioch, Ill.: Ken's happy with his Toro electric leaf blower. "I use a gas-powered model to blow leaves in our 1/2-acre back yard. But it also works great to blow snow off the porch and it also works great in front of our garage, and to blow crud out of our shop. One of the best uses is to blow leaves out of our gutters. It turned a half day job in which I had to go up and down ladders, into a 20-minute job where I can just walk along the edge of the roof."

Joe Hampton, West Point, Iowa: "My 2007 Kawasaki 610 Mule utility vehicle is my worst buy. The vacuum and vent lines freeze whenever the temperature gets down to 10 degrees above zero and then it won't run. It's poorly designed."

David Beland, Kakaska, Mich.: David's satisfied with his 1965 Deere 3020 2-WD tractor. "I use it with a dump box to haul sand. It'll go uphill with a full load, no problem. It also pulls our 18-ft. New Holland haybine."

Darrell Erhardt, Flasher, N. Dak.: Darrell's "well pleased" with his 2007 Caterpillar 470 combine. "This combine is easy to work on. I had a small problem setting the machine, but the dealer helped me by phone to fine-tune the settings.

"My 1999 Ford F-350 4-WD pickup, which I bought used, is my worst buy. It had about 20,000 miles on it when I bought it, but 10,000 miles later the transmission went out which cost me \$4,000. The transmission repair shop told me Ford doesn't build its transmissions heavy enough."

John Morgan, Grampian, Penn.: "I like my 1978 Gravely walk-behind. I've used it every year with a mower and snowblower with no problems. Nothing can beat it."

Roxann D. Burkey, Fresno, Ohio: "I'm well pleased with Melaleuca cleaning products which I began using 2 1/2 years ago (ph 208 522-0700; www.melaleuca.com). There are no phosphates or harmful chemicals in any of their cleaning products, and they're concentrated so fewer containers go into landfills. I've used several of their products on our goats, horses and dog in order to get rid of flies and fleas and soothe itchy skin. The company also sells personal care, nutritional, and health care products. I don't sell for them. I just like the product."

Eugene F. Kallaus, Burlington, Colo.: Eugene nominates his 1994 GM Sierra Meteor 350 3/4-ton, 2-WD pickup equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission as "best buy". "I put a new clutch in at about 150,000 miles. I drive this pickup every day in my sales job. I drove it until the end of 2003 when I purchased a new Chevy pickup. When I stopped driving the 1994 model it had about 497,000 miles on it but still had the original drive train. The engine had never been worked on. My 2003 model already has more than 153,000 miles on it, and I think it'll go at least 500,000 miles, too."

J.R. Wismer, Jordan, Ontario: "I like my 2007 Norwood portable sawmill (Kilworthy, Ontario ph 800 567-0404 or 705 689-2800; www.norwoodsawmills.com). It's priced right. We assembled the mill and trailer package ourselves with very little prior experience. We were able to mill enough lumber to build an addition to our hunting camp over the summer, so this machine has already paid for itself."

Edgar Wille, Morrison, Ill.: "This little tractor has done everything I've asked it to do," says Edgar, pleased with his 2003 Deere

2210 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 54-in. finish mower. "I use the mower to cut five acres of grass, and I use the loader for everything from hauling to digging, moving dirt, grading gravel, and removing snow. It's a good, all-around tractor."

William LePage, Elk River, Minn.: William's the satisfied owner of an Echo 280 chainsaw. "I bought this saw on eBay four years ago and have used it to cut 75 to 100 cords of firewood every year. It seems we've been blessed with Dutch Elm and Oak Wilt disease, so there's no end to our supply of wood. It's equipped with a 12-in. bar, and as long as the chain is sharp it'll easily cut through 10-in. dia. tree branches. It's a great saw."

Art Olive, Stacy, Minn.: "My best buy is a cloth and canvas repair product called Tear Mender (ph 773 927-9442; www.tearmender.com). I spent 40 years trying all kinds of iron-on patches and fabric cement for



patching work clothes, but was always bitterly disappointed and went back to sewing. Finally I've found a product that works. This stuff sets up quickly, holds strong, and stands up to repeated washing. And it's easy to use - just cut out the patch, apply the product, and put the patch on the clothing. If you're in a hurry you can even patch clothing while you're wearing it. The patch can go on either the outside or inside, but applying the patch on the inside looks a little neater."

Curt Koenig, Sloan, Iowa: Curt's impressed with the Air Ride suspension kit he installed under the cab on his Deere 8300T tracked tractor (Air Ride Technologies, Central City, Neb. ph 308 946-2420). "This is by far the best aftermarket product I've ever bought. Reduces wear and tear on expensive electronics and lessens operator fatigue. I'm installing a kit on my other tractor. It takes eight hours to install but is worth it many times over."

Vincent and Stephen Bliznak, Brenham, Texas: "I wanted a mower that would cut under wire fences and, after much shopping, decided to buy a Wright Fence Mower (ph 713 501-5356; www.fencemower.com). I have miles of fences overgrown with weeds, berry bushes, goat weed, etc. I needed something to clear all that growth away so I could run electric fences to keep out wild hogs, which are numerous in our area.

"I bought the company's FM 60 model. All



I do is drive my tractor along the fence and the mower does all the work. I was really surprised at how well built this machine is. I'd recommend it to anyone."

Ken Smekofske, Wenatchee, Wash.: "My worst buy is a Carhartt coat. I bought it only eight months ago but already it looks like it has been worn for five years. I don't work

any more, so I just wear the coat whenever I go outside to feed our horses and chickens. Already I've had to replace the zipper, and the coat's lining is torn and worn out."

David Keith, Rockford, Iowa: David's the disappointed owner of a 2000 Delta bandsaw. "The upper and lower wheel assemblies were out of alignment when I bought it. As a result, the blade wouldn't track correctly and rubbed on the blade guard. After trying to make the company understand the problem and after receiving parts not even related to the problem, I gave up and repaired it myself. This has been an expensive saw to own. I used to be a fan of this company, but no more."

Joe Sawyer, Gilford, Ontario: "I'm thrilled with my 2007 Pequea rotary hay rake (ph 717 354-4343; www.pequeamachine.com). It's equipped with four large flotation tires on a walking axle, which eliminates any bouncing on rough ground even at 6 mph. It fluffs the hay up into high, even rows. It's a pleasure to use."

Edward Curry, Youngstown, Alberta: "My Jay-Lor 750 vertical mixer-feeder is simple and durable. I use it to cut hay and green-feed round bales that weigh up to 1,600 lbs., and then mix in 20 to 30 percent concentrate for backgrounding calves."

Dan Dolence, Grey Eagle, Minn.: Dan's impressed with Tribco Kevlar-lined brakes, clutches, and other parts that would otherwise be lined with asbestos, bronze or other types of friction linings (Tribco, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio ph 216 486-2000).

"We used these brake linings on my Farmall 450 tractor, and it eliminated the problem of brake grab or brake lockup," says Dolence. "If you have an old Farmall with disc brakes that grab and lock up, try these

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discs. If they don't solve your problem, then there's something else wrong."

Roger Parks, Moweaqua, Ill.: "My 2007 Simplicity Champion 20 hp zero turn riding mower is comfortably maneuverable and also does an excellent job mowing. It's equipped with a 50-in. deck and independent suspension and has cut my mowing time in half. No problems.

"My 1993 GM 1500 pickup equipped with a 4.3-liter, V-6 engine and automatic transmission is a best buy. Now it has more than 180,000 miles on it with no major problems."

W.D. Cooper, Fayetteville, Penn.: "My 1993 Chevrolet Astro van equipped with a 4.3-liter, 6-cyl. engine has more than 361,000 miles on it yet has required only routine maintenance. I use this van to haul about 500 lbs. of horseshoeing tools and supplies. It still gets 18 to 20 mpg. Can anyone beat this performance?"

Ernest E. Boehm, Galesville, Wis.: "My 1998 Ford Escort wagon just keeps going and going. It gets 34 to 35 mpg and never has problems.

Wayne Brunskill, Thorndale, Ontario: "My 1928 Ford Model A Coupe is a pleasure to drive and gets a lot of looks. It's cheap to repair and gets about 20 mpg."

Paul Winslow, Ponaka, Alberta: "My 2006 Stihl 260 chainsaw is my best buy. No problems. It always starts and runs good. I've cut a lot of wood with it."

Bill Clark, Miniota, Manitoba: A 2002 (Continued on next page)