

**Robert Banks, Lynchburg, Ohio:** "One of my worst buys ever was a **Deere 726** mulch finisher. The drawbars that hold the baskets and spike tooth assembly on the back were built wrong at the factory. The dealer told me to buy some steel plate and make some shims because the company didn't have the correct parts even after the machine was in production a year. Another problem is that the hydraulic lock-up will not hold the machine up."

**Rodney E. Jarrells, Granite Falls, Wash.:** Rodney's pleased with his **Caterpillar D6M LPG** equipped with finger-tip dozer control. He uses it to rough shape and finish golf courses. "The machine is comfortable to operate, among other things. It can work in mud 3 ft. deep and still push dirt. It has automatic shift which is a real time saver because when you're pushing hard in second gear it'll automatically shift into first gear. That also makes it easy on fuel."

On the negative side, Rodney's "worst buy" is an **Acer CD** recorder he bought last October to back up his bookkeeping. "It didn't work so I contacted the company and they replaced it. However, the new one didn't work either. After four attempts at trying to have it replaced, I asked for my money back. The company told me they didn't give refunds."

**Glay Nordahl, Hixton, Wis.:** "I use it for both farm work and recreation and have put over 7,000 miles on it with virtually no problems," says Glay, well satisfied with his 1995 **Polaris 400L ATV**.

**Robert Ziegenhagel, Medicine Hat, Alberta:** "It's comfortable and easy to operate. I'm not completely exhausted at the end of the day like I have been with some other tractors," says Robert about his 1997 **Deere 7810** equipped with MFWD and self-leveling loader. "When baling, you simply knock the shuttle shift transmission into neutral, finish tying the bale, then knock it back into gear without ever having to touch the clutch pedal."

**Robert A. Lanford, Richmond, Va.:** Robert's "best buy" is his 1996 **Cub Cadet 2086** lawn tractor. It's powered by a 20 hp water-cooled Kawasaki engine and is equipped with a 60-in. deck. "The 60-in. deck helps it hold well on banks. It has separate brakes which also helps stability on hills. I have only two complaints. One is that the deck does not raise as high as I'd like, so you have to be careful crossing uneven land. Also, the drive belt on the deck doesn't last as long as I think it should."

One modification he made to the tractor was adding a weight to the uphill wheel to increase stability.

**Brandon C. White, Hillsboro, Ill.:** "We use it for everything, from hauling grain with a 16-ft. gooseneck trailer to pulling a triple axle 10-ton pin-hitch trailer that usually has a 1,100-gal. water tank on it," says Brandon about a 1983 **Ford F-250 4-WD** pickup he and his dad, Chad, call their "best buy". Powered by a 6.9-liter V-8 naturally aspirated diesel, it was purchased with 190,000 miles on it in 1992 for \$5,000. It now has 290,000 trouble-free miles on it. "My dad has had many different pickups, but this is the best one by far."

**H.S. Thorington, Palisade, Wash.:** His "worst buy" is a **Titan 2000** six-tower mini center pivot irrigation system he bought new three years ago. "It's poorly designed and constructed. The drivetrain is especially bad. I complained to the company, but they didn't do anything and have since gone out of business. I beefed up the towers, rebuilt he end

tower, and installed new gears."

**LeRoy Alt, Pacific, Mo.:** "It's an excellent machine, a great value for the price," says LeRoy, pleased with his 1997 **New Holland TR88** combine. "It works great and dealer service has been outstanding."

LeRoy lists his **Hiniker 3300** field cultivator as a "worst buy". "The frame is weak and has broken several times. The pivot bearing on the tandem axle doesn't last more than a season at best. It also has a poor paint job."

**Glenn Allen, Mt. Vernon, Ohio:** Glenn's "best buy" is a 1981 **Versatile 555** tractor he

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bought used. "It starts easily even in the coldest weather and it's easy to work on because of its component design."

On the negative side, he lists his **Bush Hog 1000H** backhoe. "I bought it new to put in short strips of tile. It worked OK until it got hot, then you couldn't raise the bucket out of the ground. I talked to both my dealer and the company, neither of which were much help. I found out later the oil tank was too small for the self-contained hydraulic system and the heat build-up was ruining pumps. I finally sold the thing, after telling the buyer of its history, and replaced it with a Deere industrial hoe that I mounted on a Deere 3020."

**Kody Nielsen, Paul, Idaho:** "I bought it new in 1997 and am happier every day with my purchase," says Kody about his "best buy" **Ford F-150 4-WD XLT** equipped with extended cab and short box. "The 5.4-liter Triton engine has plenty of power for farm work. It has no trouble pulling loaded trailers, although the springs are too light for really heavy loads. I've put over 53,000 miles on it in two years and it's required nothing more than routine maintenance. This pickup has been nothing but a pleasure to drive, whether in the field or on the freeway. I call it the Cadillac of Workhorses."

**Robert O. Martin, Brookhaven, Miss.:** "The transmission went out at 8,000 miles," says Robert, unhappy with his 1998 **Chevy** dually pickup powered by a 6.5-liter turbo diesel engine. "The engine won't rev up for at least five minutes when the temperature's below zero."

On the other hand, he's had good luck with his 1994 **GMC** dually powered by a 6.5-liter turbo diesel. "I've had no problems in 100,000 miles and four years."

**R.P. Jones, Peerless, Mont.:** "It's the best piece of equipment I've ever used to pre-work summerfallow for seeding small grains," says R.P. about his 1999 **Phillips 43-ft.** chain-type rotary harrow. "It also works great for working in granular herbicides. And it does a wonderful job of leveling land without pulverizing the soil. It's the best."

**Robert Takos, Attica, N.Y.:** Robert's unhappy with his **Jet** mini metal lathe. "It's the poorest quality tool I ever bought. The metal's weak and the threading tool bar bent, then fell off. Rotation can't be stopped with the clutch so I have to turn off the whole machine."

**Andy Steinkamp, Woodburn, Ore.:** Andy's "best buy" is a 1992 **Kawasaki KE 100** motorcycle he bought last winter. "At first, it was geared too high so I changed

sprockets. Now it has plenty of power and goes anywhere. It starts on the first kick and runs great. The oil injector is the nicest thing. You put gas in one tank and 2-stroke oil in another."

**Arvin Larson, Ray, N. Dak.:** "It has plenty of power and is easy to use in areas that a conventional riding mower couldn't get into," says Arvin about his **Dixon ZTR** mower. "It's easy to operate and makes lawn care a breeze."

**George Hardy, Jr., Forest City, N.C.:** George says both his **Deere 620 2-cyl.** tractor and his **Massey Ferguson 283** have been good tractors. "But my best buy is my **Mahindra 475** made by a former IH plant in India," he says. "Anyone who can work on an IH can repair it very simply. That's important."

**Ed Vollborn, Jackson, Ohio:** As leader of Ohio State University's grazing program in the southern district, Ed says the Italian-made **M50 Abbriata** mini baler he's been working with for a year shows a lot of poten-



tial but still has some bugs to be worked out (Masters Farm Supply, Rt. 3, Box 392, Hwy. 73, Altha, Fla. 32421; ph 850 762-3221 or 3793 or 4322).

"We bought it to make 50-lb. round bales," he says. "It definitely makes a nice, firm, stand-up bale when you can get the hay to go through it. It has only a 35-in. throat so the problem is that pickup capacity is very limited. We can't bale our big 9-ft. swaths without plugging it up, particularly in first-cut hay. We had better luck in regrowth hay, but we need some fine-tuning in both the equipment and operator skill if it's to work properly in our system. The distributor has been most helpful in trying to resolve our problems."

**Max Hollander, Fairfield, Iowa:** "It's the only spreader I ever used that chops material fine enough to put on our pastures," says Max, pleased with his 1998 **Knight** manure spreader.

**James Stadtmueller, Monticello, Iowa:** James likes both of his **Case-IH 5250's** equipped with MFWD. "They're a lot of tractor in a 105 hp class. They use 2 to 2 1/2 gals. of fuel per hour, which is a lot of work per gal. They've got good visibility, a comfortable cab and are easy to enter and exit. I can't say enough good things about them."

**Willard Donahey, Utica, Ohio:** "It has plenty of power and speed and the drive train and frame are built rugged," says Willard about his "best buy" 1998 **Dodge Ram 2-WD** pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine and automatic limited slip rear axle. "The limited slip rear axle will get you out of some sticky spots. It gets decent gas mileage, even pulling a tandem trailer and car hauler trailer."

**Darwin Congdon, Galesville, Wis.:** "It has plenty of power for pumping liquid fertilizer through even the finest filter," says Darwin, happy with his 5.5 hp **Honda** transfer pump. "The motor starts on the first pull every time in both hot and cold weather, and even after long periods of being outside."

**Lloyd Kentner, Rossville, Ill.:** Lloyd's "best buy" is his 1998 **Homelite** string trim-

mer, which is guaranteed for two years. "It has plenty of power and starts and runs well. For a purchase price of around \$75, you can use them for two or three years, throw them away and get another."

**Kenneth L. Smith, Waterloo, Ind.:** A 1997 **Deere 6-WD** Gator heads Kenneth's list of "best buys". "Works great for picking up stones in no-till soybeans and lots of other chores around the farm. It has a real handy hydraulic dump bed and is built heavy enough to do any kind of chore. It's also easy for my wife to drive."

**Larry Schulze, Clifton, Texas:** Larry's 1999 **DeWalt** cordless drill is one of his "best buys". "It has lots of power and I like the keyless chuck and 1-hour quick-charge batteries. I also like the 1/2-in. chuck and the variable torque settings. I haven't used another electric drill since I bought this one."

Another of his "best buys" is a 1998 **Miller 130** wire feed welder. "It's a 120-volt, 130-amp welder weighing just 85 lbs. so it's very portable. I use it both in my shop and in the field, powering it with a 4,000-watt portable generator I have in my truck."

**Darrell Gerber, Monroeville, Ohio:** "I plant a garden every year and have always purchased my seed from **Guerney's** in Yankton, S. Dak., but no more. Two years in a row my order was not filled, but my checks were cashed. This spring a \$12 item was never sent. I called them three times and three times they said my order would be sent, but I never received it. They can take me off their mailing list."

**Tom Wessman, Albert City, Iowa:** Tom liked a friend's **Farm King** snowblower so much, he bought one of his own. "One thing I don't like is that they changed shear bolt designs on the pto, switching from a single 3/8-in. bolt to two 1/4-in. bolts. They're nearly impossible to put in."

He's also pleased with his **Art's-Way P.M. 30** grinder/mixer. "I average a load a day, so it gets used a lot," he says. "They could make it easier to grease. Also, it's a 1,000 rpm pto so the #60 roller chains don't last more than 6 months, even though I oil them regularly."

**Ivan Gleeson, Bloomington, Ill.:** "It's just an all-around good truck," says Ivan about his **Dodge Ram 2500 4-WD**. "It drives and rides smoothly and has plenty of hauling power."

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**Allen Clausen, Brooklyn Park, Minn.:** One of Allen's "best buys" was a 1/4-in. **Black & Decker** electric drill. "It was driven over by my wife. The case was cracked and a few screws in the drill came loose. But I twisted it around a little and used it for a couple more years."

**Oliver B. Matt, Moiese, Mont.:** "All I've put into it are new tires and fuel," says Oliver about a 1968 **Ford 5000** utility tractor he bought used. "It's my only tractor and it gets used hard every year for field work, haying and all my other chores. It's easy on fuel and it always starts."

On the negative side, he's had bad luck with his 1997 **McCulloch** chainsaw. "The whole starting mechanism fell off after the first hour of use. After it was repaired, it never started right again without priming it. I gave it away

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