

Best & Worst Buys

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for use as an exercise machine, because you could sure build up your arm muscles pulling on the rope trying to start it."

Dale Orman, Maywood, Neb.: One of Dale's "best buys" is a 1997 **Sunflower** 6000 series land finisher equipped with hydraulic coulters, shovels and tine harrows. "It provides a perfect one-pass seed bed in corn-stalks when planting irrigated corn on corn."

"I'm also very pleased with my **Micro-Trak** ST424 planter monitor. I use it on an 8-row Case-IH 800 air seeder. I kept the air seeder's original monitor and added the new one. It gives me extra confidence and data."

Another "best buy" is Dale's **Honda** 4514 riding mower. "It has a water-cooled automotive-type engine. It's the most trouble-free mower I've ever owned."

Glen Buckingham, Fairfield, Iowa: Glen's having a hard time shifting gears on his 1966 **Farmall** 706. "There are lemon laws for cars and trucks, so why not tractors? I've complained about the problem to my local dealer, but have received little or no response. International Harvester should be responsible for the needed repair, not the farmer."

Joe Thomas, Mattson, Miss.: Joe's "worst buy" is the **Delta** Crossaver tool box he bought for his pickup in 1997. "I couldn't shut the lid from the driver's side from the beginning. Then, most of the time when driving down the road, the lid would open up and I'd have to stop to close it. The tool box also leaked in heavy rain. I called the factory but did not get any satisfaction from them. I've since bought a **United Welding** box that is much better and cheaper."

D. Thomson, Napa, Calif.: In 1998, he equipped his Ford orchard tractor with **Trelleborg** bias-ply flotation tires so he could get into his vineyard sooner without creating compaction. "As great as the tires are in wet or moist soil conditions, they can barely make it though the vineyard when the grapes are ripe, approximately mid-summer."

Charlie Bratton, Albuquerque, N.M.: One of Charlie's "best buys" is the **Ford** F-100 pickup equipped with a 292 cu. in. engine he purchased new in 1962. Another is a **Ford** F-100 pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine that he purchased new in 1973. "My 1962 F-100 has 327,000 miles on it. It still has the original engine and uses only about 2 qts. of oil every 800 miles. It runs like new. I'm also well pleased with my 1973 **Ford** F-100."

On the negative side, he had trouble with a **Gannon** 8-ft. flip-over blade he special ordered from the factory. "The bushings the blade mount on were 5/16-in. under sized. With too much play, the first time I used the blade it fell off the framework. However, the dealer installed the proper bushings and shafts at no charge. They did a good job on it and got it working properly."

Eugene B. Miller, Farmersburg, Iowa: "We just overhauled it for the first time last year," says Eugene about a "best buy" **Allis Chalmers** D15 he bought when new and has used to plow 80 acres a year every since.

John M. Heiser, Dayton, Ore.: "It cuts very well and I'm finished before I know it," says John, well pleased with his **Deere** 955 lawn tractor equipped with 6-ft. mid-mount mower deck, loader and garden tiller. "The foot-controlled hydrostatic transmission is easy to operate."

Joe Meyer, Williamsburg, Ind.: Joe's "best buy" is a 1998 **Panasonic** "Gunslinger" 260 welder. "This welder has the capacity for heavy steel as well as light 18 to 20-gauge material. The additional stick feature gives you the versatility of quickly doing a wide range of tasks, including hard surfacing and

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working with cast iron."

On the "worst buy" side, Joe lists his 1998 **Dodge** Durango SLT. "This vehicle is grossly overrated. Dinky visors are just one example of the many design shortfalls. The heating system isn't even adequate to keep everyone warm in the front seat. Unfortunately, we didn't recognize these problems until six months after we bought it. If you're in the market for an SUV, my advice is to buy something other than a Durango."

Paul Burrows, Sutton, Mass.: "I'm 54 years old and this is the first tractor I ever bought new. It's great," says Paul about his 1995 **Ford-New Holland** 1720 tractor. "It starts, runs and shifts fine. The four-wheel drive works great in mud and snow and it's easy on fuel and easy to service."

On the other hand, he's unhappy about one aspect of the tractor and the **Ford** 7108 loader he bought to use with it. "The tractor's hydraulic system has no power. The dealer says that's just the way OSHA wants it. Also, all the welds on the loader frame broke during light snow removal, and the tractor had less than 200 hours on it."

Merrit L. Wright, Aurora, Ill.: "It always starts on the first pull, mows straight and cuts nice," says Merrit whose "best buy" is a **Toro** Super Pro Recycler mower equipped with a Tecumseh overhead valve engine.

John McAdams, Dalhart, Texas: John's "best buy" is the 1999 **Polaris** Xplorer 4-WD ATV he uses for checking his center pivot irrigation system and other chores. "Four-wheel drive is more versatile and comes in handy in sticky spots. I like the automatic transmission better than standard. Bigger tires give you more ground clearance but really aren't worth all the extra money. I think the 300 cc engine is big enough for most uses on the farm."

John purchased an ATV trailer to use for hauling rocks, grass and firewood.

Garlon Peterson, Wild Rose, Wis.: Garlon's annoyed by a problem with his 1989 **Ford** F-150 pickup equipped with a 300 cu. in., 6-cyl. engine and 5-speed transmission. "It doesn't cruise smooth at low load and low speed, but runs fine under load. I've driven other pickups with standard transmissions that do the same thing, whether they're V-8's or 6's. It drives me nuts."

Floyd Oyhus, Medora, N. Dak.: "My 'best buy' is my 90-30 **Ford** Versatile tractor. It starts easy and, except for minor repairs, has been trouble-free the last three years."

James W. Flaming, Hillsboro, Kan.: James is pleased with his 1990 **Stihl** 026

Owner's Report On ATV's

Troy Goode, Cox's Creek, Ky.: Troy's generally well pleased with his 1999 4-WD **Polaris** 500 Scrambler. "It's more of a sport racer-type four-wheeler than a utility-type ATV. But that doesn't mean you can't chase cows or scout crops with it. It's a little faster than many ATV's, and I really like the automatic transmission, 4-WD, electric start, reverse and its high speed."

However, the machine also has a few problems, Troy adds. "One is how weak the rims seem to be. They dent too easily. Another problem is how heavy this machine is. It weighs 542 lbs., which is pretty heavy for a sport racer-style bike. This is probably one of the reasons the rims dent easily. I'd like to see the manufacturer equip it with stronger rims. It would also be nice to have a light showing when 4-WD is engaged."

Troy's 1984 200X Honda three-wheeler is also a "best buy". "It's one of the best ATV's ever built, in my opinion."

Charles Ries, Shellburg, Iowa: "It handles well, turns short, has a handy electric starter and good suspension," says Charles about his 1998 2-WD **Honda** Recon. "One of my complaints is that they need to equip it with an hour and mileage meter so you know when it's time to service it."

The ATV is equipped with front and rear racks, which come in handy for such jobs as fixing fence and hauling seed, Charles says.

Billy Bishop, Section, Ala.: Billy owns a 1989 **Yamaha** and a 1987 **Kawasaki**. "The Yamaha is stiff riding because of its 'shockless' design. The Kawasaki has a softer ride, but will dump you because it's built for speed. The small batteries my ATV's are equipped with don't last more than six months. They should be equipped with full-size 12-volt batteries. Also, frames and brakes should be stronger. The brakes have to be repaired too often."

Billy built a 12-volt sprayer to use on fence rows and in the garden. "It's similar to most commercial units but was cheaper to make. All it cost was price of the pump, plastic drums, hose clamps, and wire for the battery."

Gary Seim, Pelican Rapids, Minn.: "It's the best buy I've ever made on a recreational vehicle," says Gary about his 1993 2-WD **Yamaha** Big Bear. "I haven't so much as changed a spark plug on it, even though I use it daily to check cattle and snow plow."

However, Gary says the manufacturer should make the oil plug easier to get at. "I also wish they'd equip the engine with rope start for emergencies."

chainsaw. "It's a lightweight machine that's easy to handle and is easy on fuel. It cuts well and starts easy."

On the negative side, he's unhappy with his **Skil** 2105 electric screwdriver. "It doesn't have enough power to drive a screw into soft butter."

Gerrit Douma, Charlotte, Mich.: "It's the all-around best pickup I've ever owned," says Gerrit about his 1999 **Dodge** Ram 2500 powered by a Cummins diesel engine. "Its slow speed torque is awesome. It's an excellent towing vehicle."

"I'm also impressed with the **Deere** 6110 MFWD tractor I purchased a year ago."

Alan Horn, Weeping Water, Neb.: Alan's pleased with his 1993 2-WD **Kawasaki** Bayou 220. "It's easy to drive and load into the back of my pickup. It's also easy on gas. The only way it could be improved is to make it easier to start in winter."

Alan mounted a toolbox on the front rack to carry an assortment of tools.

Cecil F. Fulmer, Gilbert, S.C.: "I received a recall notice about a small problem with the starter which the dealer replaced. I've had no other problems since," says Cecil, happy with his 1995 **Honda** TRX 300. "There are no changes that could improve it, in my opinion."

Wayne Marcus, La Motte, Iowa: "It could turn better," says Wayne who's otherwise satisfied with his 1993 **Honda** TRX 300.

Richard L. Smith, Tipton, Mich.: Richard says his 1997 **Polaris** 500 is hard to turn. "They should also design it so the oil is easier to check."

Bob Whearty, Randolph, Kan.: "The clutch needs repairing regularly," says Bob, who owns a 1992 **Yamaha** Big Bear 4-WD. "Otherwise, it's very useful for doing pasture and cattle work, field errands, checking crops and hauling light loads."

Elton Dale Bahm, Independence, La.: Elton's happy with his 1996 **Honda** 2-WD. "I like the engine, as I do all my Honda engines."

He purchased a **Fimco** LG-114 14-gal., 12-volt sprayer form Home Depot to use for spot treating Roundup. "It's an excellent buy and works like it's built for an ATV, which it wasn't."

Gaylin Tanner, Declo, Idaho: "I've put I don't know how many miles on it with nothing more than routine maintenance," says Gaylin about his "best buy" 1989 **Honda** 300. "However, I would like to see the manufacturer put grease zerks on the tie rod ends and a twist throttle instead of a lever. I'd also like a larger opening in the oil filter hole and see it located in a handier spot."

James T. Zimmerman, Port Hope, Mich.: James reports "no problems" with his **Yamaha** Moto 4-WD. "A reverse gear would be nice, however."

Mark Denton, Denton, Kan.: "It was one of the first 4-WD's on the market and has been, for the most part, extremely reliable," says Mark, well satisfied with his 1985 **Honda** TRX 125. "One problem I had is that the front brakes were poorly designed and the cables broke or bound up frequently. Hydraulic brakes would have been a great improvement."

Jess Southard, Topeka, Kan.: Jess's "best buy" was the English-built **David Brown** 995 diesel tractor he bought new in 1974. "It was a heavier-built tractor than any other brands rated at 58 hp. The salesman convinced me it was the most economical tractor built. He was right, as it would use only 3 gals. of fuel per hour pulling a 3-bottom plow. On all other work, such as baling hay and loader use, it would use only 1 1/2 gals. per hour."

"I sold out in 1997 and David Brown brought \$800 more than I paid for it new. I checked with the man who bought it, and he says he's had no trouble with it. He's also impressed with its performance."