

owner of three "all time best buy" **Deere** 4960 tractors. "They each have over 3,000 trouble-free hours on them and still run like Cadillacs," he says. "Why did John Deere ever build anything else?"

Ken Scharabok, Waverly, Tenn.: Ken's worst buy is a 5-ft. **King Kutter** rotary mower. "Apparently the company doesn't believe in using lock washers, as most bolts loosen up during operation. The weld holding the rear wheel to the hub broke and the gearbox mounting surfaces required an ex-

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tensive rework because of loose bolts and stress cracks. My experience is about one hour of repair for every five hours of use."

Dennis Huwe, Bagley, Minn.: Dennis's best buy is his 1998 **Polaris** Big Boss 6-WD ATV equipped with 500 c.c., four-stroke engine. "It has replaced my pickup for 90 percent of the jobs around our farm," he says. "I use it for everything from elk hunting in Colorado to fencing in swamps here at home and pull-starting full-size pickups. It's never let me down. I've even built some specialized equipment for it that I use in my commercial berry patch, including a rear-mounted pull-type sprayer equipped with a 30-gal. tank and a ground-driven fertilizer side-dresser."

Dennis is also happy with his **Lincoln** Weld-Pac 100 wire feed welder. "I'm not much of a welder but this little beauty is forgiving. It can be plugged into any 110-volt, 15-amp outlet or can be taken on-site to jobs and used with just the addition of a small generator. Although it is designed for light duty, it's adequate for 80 percent of the welding jobs that I have around the farm."

Cecil Harrington, Mayville, N.Y.: Cecil's best buy is an Italian-built **Sitrex** RP/8 13 1/2-ft. 6-wheel rake he bought used from his local Deere dealer in Clymer, N.Y. (06018 Trestina, Perugia, Italy; 075 854-0021, fax 0523). "Once we got it adjusted, it did a beautiful job of raking. We don't know what year it is, but we wrote to the company in Italy and they sent us a book of instructions on how to adjust and use it."

"They've all been good to me over the years," adds Cecil, satisfied owner of a 1947 **Farmall** H, a 1950 **IH** 460, a 1973 **Allis Chalmers** 200 and a 1983 **Same** Panther 4-WD. "The 460 guzzles gas, while the old H runs all day on 5 gallons of fuel doing hard work. The first time we've ever had to send a tractor away for repairs was recently when the Allis developed internal transmission trouble and parts aren't currently available."

Stuart R. Montgomery, Webster, N.Y.: "It's the best mower I ever owned," says Stuart about his 1998 **Deere** 345 lawn tractor equipped with 54-in. mower deck. "The 18 hp V twin liquid-cooled engine with overhead valves has plenty of power. Cruise control lever, power steering, hydraulic foot controls, tilt steering wheel and hour meter are standard equipment."

Thomas R. Harper, Simpson, Sask.: "The poor customer service I received for what is otherwise a nice machine is a disgrace," says Thomas who's had trouble getting help with an air conditioning problem in a **Caterpillar** Challenger 75 that he bought in 1994.

"The first summer the air conditioning worked poorly. The dealer said the system was not cycling properly and would require a company-rebuilt unit. I managed to keep the air conditioning going over the next three summers while I tried to get the company to fix the problem. Last April, the company again said it would send someone out, but, as of October, the problem still hadn't been fixed."

David Dorale, Oto, Iowa: "It's built well and it's easy to change buckets," says David, pleased with his 1996 **Allied** 595 front end loader. "It fits real nicely on my **IH** 1086 tractor and was reasonably priced."

Philip Meyer, New Prague, Minn.: Philip's most recent best buy is his 1999 **Ford** F-250 Superduty diesel pickup equipped with extended cab and full box. "Handling is excellent and it rides better than a mini van we own," he says. "It has awesome power and the Allison automatic transmission shifts exceptionally smoothly. It's pretty fuel efficient, too, getting 14 to 18 mpg."

Cody Griffin, Ames, Iowa: "I wouldn't use any other mineral feeder," says Cody who's had good luck with **Pride of the Farm** feeders (P.O. Box 2000, Hwy 16 West, Houghton, Iowa 52631; ph 800 553-1791).

"We bought our first one four or five years ago and it seems to be indestructible. One-ton bulls push it around but it still won't flip over. The cover is made from recycled belting which keeps mineral fresh and dry. I'm so impressed, I became a dealer."

Larry M. Elgin, Burlingame, Kan.: "It has 9,000 hours on it and the only troubles we ever had were minor, with the hydraulic pump and valve," says Larry, well satisfied with his 1970 **Deere** 4020.

Linden D. Park, Independence, Ore.: Linden likes the handling and fuel economy of his 1989 **Ford** 4610 tractor.

"However, when making a left turn, the left front tire rubs on the steering control rod which comes from the steering wheel area to the front of the tractor. Seems like a glitch that could have been avoided by some common sense engineering."

He's also generally satisfied with his 1989 **Ford** 7210 tractor equipped with a bucket and forklift. "The operator could have a better view of the forks. Otherwise, it works fine."

Claude Pierret, Pasco, Wash.: "Our best buy is the **Caterpillar** D-6C 17 R series tractor we purchased in 1974 with 200 hours," says Claude. "The engine had 9,038 hours on it before it required an in-frame overhaul. The transmission, final drives, clutch lining and rear end gears have never been touched even though the tractor now has a total of 17,650 hours on it. It's still used on a regular basis alongside a 1980 Cat D-6D we bought used five years ago."

Mike Ksioszk, Fredonia, Wis.: "Amazing," says Mike about the 1990 **Ford** F-150 XLT Lariat 4-WD pickup he bought used with 84,000 miles on it. "This truck can pull 14,000 lbs. with the factory bumper hitch, more than my previous F-250 could pull. I've had no problems other than regularly scheduled maintenance. It now has 137,000 miles on it after four years. I only wish the clutch wasn't so expensive to put in. It costs about \$750 installed."

On the other hand, one of Mike's "worst buys" is his 1995 **Polaris** 300 4-wheel ATV. "It hasn't idled right since it was new. I took it back to the dealer and he told me it was a matter of idle adjustment. What a joke! Four trips back to the dealer for the same problem in six months. Finally, I took it to another dealer and he fixed it for \$80. Something that

regulates the fuel/air mixture kept failing. Now, the problem has started again but I don't have \$80 to throw out the window every time this happens. Polaris claims they make the best products, but I'll never buy another one. Next time, I'll buy a Yamaha or a Kawasaki Mule."

Paul Friederich, Savanna, Ill.: "We've used it three years and put 500 hours on it and the only expenses we've had were the regular ones - gas, oil and blades," says Paul, well pleased with his 1996 **Grasshopper** 720K riding mower.

One of his all-time best buys is a **Farmall** 460 tractor he bought in 1963. "It was used as the main tractor around the farm until 1977 and was completely overhauled in 1975. We used a mounted corn picker on the tractor until 1988. It's still being used on the farm and has about 20,000 hours on it."

His worst buy was a small **Troybilt** rototiller. "It was very hard to control and dangerous to operate. If it hit a deep hard spot, it would jump - even into a fence or onto another row."

Thomas P. Schultz, Nora Springs, Iowa: Thomas's best buy is his 1985 **Case** 2294 tractor. "It's comfortable to operate and controls are handy to get at. It's easy to operate and has good vision from the cab. Maintenance on the engine and access to it are easy because of the tilting hood and removable access panels.

"My only complaint is that the 3-pt. hitch does not return to the same position or move up and down in direct relation to the lever movement in the cab. It's nothing like my Deere utility tractor on which the 3-pt. is easily controlled to the 1/4 in.

"It has plenty of power, too, since the engine has been turned up to 145 hp, the maximum recommended for this engine."

Thomas is also very satisfied with his 1980 **Koyker** K-5 front-end loader. "The only repairs have been to the bolts that attach the lift cylinders, hoses and seals."

Douglas Mosser, Beach, N. Dak.: "I'm able to spray in high winds and haven't had any trouble with it so far," says Douglas about his 1995 **Ag-Shield** pickup-mounted sprayer equipped with manual-fold 60-ft. hooded booms (Ag-Shield Mfg., Box 9, Benito, Manitoba, Canada R0L 0C0; ph 800 561-0132).

"I mounted it on a 1978 Chevy 3/4-ton pickup on which I doubled up the rear springs and added air bags."

On the negative side, Douglas is disappointed with his 1994 **Haybuster** 2575 25-ft. no-till drill. "The drill was real heavy and awkward to move. It was a pain to climb around on to fold up. The bearings had to be replaced every 2,500 acres or so and that was

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labor-intensive. Disc blades had to be replaced at about the same interval."

Brian Molnar, Kennedy, Sask.: "It's a beautiful-looking, eye-catching truck and I haven't lost a drag race with it yet," says Brian, proud owner of a 1998 **Dodge** 1500 SLT 4-WD pickup equipped with 5.9-liter engine, extended cab and short box. "It has lots of power, comfortable seats and lots of room in the cab. It gives reasonable gas mileage. I've put more than 3,000 miles on it, no problems."

However, Brian's less than satisfied with

the **Goodyear** Wrangler AT/S 265-75/16 tires on his pickup. "They're an all-around good tire but are terrible in water. They have a tendency to hydroplane and I've almost hit the ditch twice while hitting a puddle on pavement. I'm going to switch to the Aqua version of these tires."

Ronald Shimanski, Silver Lake, Minn.: A new 36 by 60 by 12-ft. pole machine shed put up by **Lester Buildings** last November qualifies as one of Ronald's best buys. "It's constructed of high quality materials and workmanship. We haven't had a single problem with it."

Lyle Oye, Pipestone, Minn.: Lyle and the board of directors of B&O Trucking had a lot of problems with a 1998 **Dodge** pickup. They sent letters to not only Dodge officials in Detroit and Minnesota, but copies to the attorney general of South Dakota.

"We haul live cargo, up to 700 lbs. of pigs per load, and we purchased a Dodge pickup because we thought this pickup would be the most reliable and dependable one. What we experienced was a pickup that had so many problems three Dodge dealers couldn't, or wouldn't, repair it. More importantly we were treated with total disregard by the Dodge district representative. Problems were finally resolved when we traded for a new 1999 Ford pickup. We're trying to get compensation for the trade cost. Without it, you can bet we'll never consider purchasing or recommending a Dodge or Chrysler product again."

Van L. Pfalser, Caney, Kan.: Ivan has a generic worst buy. "When buying electric fence insulators, pass up all the red, white, gray and other pretty-colored ones in favor of the standard black ones.

"It's a well-known fact that the sun's ultra-violet light deteriorates any plastic material. The lighter the color, the faster it deteriorates. I have, on a whim, used white and fluorescent red insulators and found that within a year if you hit them with a hammer they'll fall apart. In contrast, I have some black ones that have been in place for up to 20 years and they're still as good as the day they were nailed to the post."

Harvey Bettenhausen, Beemer, Neb.: "Maneuverability is excellent. It turns on a dime," says Harvey, happy with his 1995 **Dixon** 3360 riding lawn mower. "We've had no expenses in the three years we've had the mower. It's a wonderful machine. I love it."

John McCrackin, Carson City, Mich.: "We've been using **Deere** tractors for over 40 years and have never had to replace an engine or transmission," says John who calls his 4640, 4440, 4230's and 2240 all "best buys". "They all have between 4,000 and 7,000 virtually trouble-free hours on them. We had to replace the clutch on the 2240 from overuse.

"We have the fuel pump on one 4230 and the 4440 turned up to give us more power, between 120 to 175 hp."

Neal McLeary, Elkton, Md.: Neal's "very satisfied" with his 1973 **Deere** 4030, but says the company could have improved the tractor in a few ways too. "It needed a better seat for a smoother ride. It needed better lights for night work and turn signals for safety. A sleeve in the engine recently developed a water leak which led to a rebuilt engine but only after many, many hours."

Neal added a Deere left hand mirror for road work, halogen lights on the right side to eliminate a blind spot, and a horn.

Dale Metter, Iroquois, S. Dak.: "It's an

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