

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
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the survey form on our website at
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John G. Ruff, Logan, Kan.: John’s “worst buy” is **Champion** spark plugs. “I’ve used them for more than 40 years in all my engines with good results, and I always considered them the best spark plugs on the market. No more. I’ll never buy them again.”

“I don’t know if the problems started when the company stopped chrome plating their plugs or if they changed their metal alloy. I do know that if you remove the spark plugs regularly, you won’t have any problems. But if the engine is in excellent shape and the plugs don’t have to be removed for several years, you’ll be faced with a very serious problem. The plugs will fuse to the cylinder heads much the way that manifold bolts used to. At best, it’s an extremely difficult job to remove the plugs. At worst, the plugs will break off inside the head.

“I recently had to tell a neighbor that I wouldn’t be able to finish cutting his wheat because I had changed spark plugs on my combine engine and ended up with a plug broken off inside the head. Two of the other plugs are stuck and I have no idea how to get them out. I changed the plugs because I had noticed that one plug was misfiring, and I thought that I’d better replace them all. I’ve never had anything like this happen before and I’ve never been so mad in my life.

places where a conventional mower conditioner can’t go. I generally cut the hay and let it roll out into a windrow which I bale later. By turning the center gearbox upside down and switching the blades from one side to the other, Another advantage is that I can also use the rig to spread hay. Last spring I used it to spread hay for the first time and it did a beautiful job. I’d recommend it to anyone.”

Olen Rowe, Washington Court, Ohio: Olen owns both a 1987 **Case-IH 585** with 1,775 hours on it and a 1997 Deere 5200 with 370 hours on it.

“The Deere is very noisy,” he says. “However, I wear hearing protectors whenever I operate either tractor since neither has a cab.”

For night work, extra lighting was added to the Case, while the Deere came with “pretty good” lights, he says. Front weights were also added to both tractors.

Frieda Dejong, Dapp, Alberta: “I’m no great mechanic, but I can change the oil myself and it handles really well especially around the woodlot,” says Frieda, pleased with a Kubota L245 4-WD she bought used in 1983. “It runs cheap, always starts and has more power than the 25 hp it’s rated at.”

Maci Berkeley, Rivendell Sod Farm, Glenwood Springs, Colo.: “Our ‘best buy’ is **PennMulch**, a product developed by Penn State University to help get grass seed off to a great start (Penn Turf Products, Inc., 149 West Fairmount Ave., State College, Pa. 16801 ph 800 545-7097). It comes in pellet form and is made from recycled newsprint and superabsorbent polymers. It also contains starter fertilizer. First I spread the grass seed over the ground, then I use a commercial spreader to spread the pellets over the seed. Water causes the pellets to expand and cover the seedbed, retaining moisture at the seed level. Another advantage is that the pellets stick to the ground which helps keep the seed from blowing away.

“I like it better than straw because it’s completely weed-free and it eventually disappears so there’s nothing to clean up. Also, the fertilizer it contains is slowly released into the soil. The application rate is 60 to 75 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. Comes in 25 and 50-lb. bags. We’d recommend it to anyone.”

Lorne Glanville, Walton, Ontario: Lorne nominates his 1996 **Blu Jet** 15-ft. coulters cart as his “best buy”. “It does a good job in most conditions. I think it’s the best coulters cart on the market.”

David L. Brown, Beaver City, Neb.: “This tractor carries on the Versatile tradition of simplicity, ruggedness, durability and ease of maintenance,” says David who is impressed with his 1998 **New Holland 9482** tractor. “It has excellent power and is easy to drive and service.

“We compared it with other tractors of comparable size and the 9482 seemed the clear winner. Its simplicity of design was the biggest selling point - no maze of electronic bells and whistles on this beauty.”

However, the company could continue to improve ease of shifting, make fewer areas to grease every day and make them more accessible, and the ladder into the cab could be located in a more convenient position, he adds.

Robert Blankespoor, George, Iowa: “Very satisfied” is how Robert feels about his 1981 **International 1086**. “It’s had the power set at 170 hp since it had 650 hours on it. Now it has 6,000 hours on it and I’ve spent very little in repairs on it. The pto splines went out at 5,000 hours and we put in a new clutch

“I have no doubt that the problem lies with the metal in the plugs. On the plugs that I did manage to remove, the metal looks like what we used to find in well cooked engine manifolds. I don’t know if the problem is that the company tried to cut costs by switching to a less expensive metal alloy, or if their quality control has slipped since they moved production out of the U.S. However, if you plan to put a set of Champion spark plugs in an engine that’s in excellent shape, you’d better hope that you’ll never have to take them out again because there’s a good chance that you won’t be able to. I also have to replace the spark plugs in several of my other engines - assuming that I can still get them out.”

Bruce Ottway, Murray, Ky.: Bruce has had good luck with his 1975 **Case 990**. “I bought it with only 1,250 hours on it. It’s been very dependable in all ways except one - the brakes grab severely making it somewhat unsafe to drive.

“The only improvement that could be made would be in routine maintenance. The power steering pump has to be removed in order to replace the filter and it has spin-out wheels that do not hold in the position they’re set at.”

Harold Neldon, Frazeyburg, Ohio: Harold nominates his **Rhino** rotary Bush Hog-type mower as his “best buy” (Box 712, Seguin, Texas 78156 ph 210 372-3080). “It’s a heavy duty, 10-ft. wide machine that weighs about 1,800 lbs. I use my Case 830 tractor to pull it. I can use it to mow hay through wet