

neck trailers, and many of the loads have grossed 26,000 to 30,000 lbs. We've just added a 1996 model to our fleet that's equipped the same way."

Gordon Breit, Utica, Kan.: Gordon's impressed with his **Quinstar** Followmaster II sweep implement. "It pulls easy and does a good job of leveling the soil. I can use it to do either primary or secondary tillage."

David Tatum, Trenton, Mo.: "My best buy 1979 **International** 986 tractor has more than 5,000 hours on it with no problems at all.

"My 1986 **Gleaner** M3 combine does a good job in corn and beans. It's been trouble-free.

"My **International** 800 planter is a best buy. I use it to no-till corn and soybeans. It does a good job."

On the minus side, he lists his **Deere** 8300 grain drill. "It was high priced and equipped with Tru-Vee openers that never worked right. It didn't cover the seed properly no matter how many times I worked the ground."

Ronald W. Butler, Morning Sun, Iowa: Ronald nominates his **Deere** 4250 tractor equipped with a 15-speed power shift transmission as his "best buy". "It's a super tractor that's easy to operate and has a lot of power. No problems.

"My **DMC** 2-auger Stirrator is my worst buy. It has had too many problems to list. I can't leave and have it running for fear of what might happen."

Ben E. Walter, Dunseith, N. Dak.: Ben's the owner of a "best buy" 1994 **Melroe** Bob-

"I can't leave and have it running for fear of what might happen."

cat 743B skidsteer loader. "It's a versatile and maintenance-free machine. We use it to load round bales that weigh 1,200 to 1,300 lbs. and to clean barns and push snow. We also use it with a rock fork to pick up rocks. It's a very dependable machine with a lot of hard hours on it."

Jerry Durham, Randall, Kan.: Jerry likes his **Sunflower** 1232 32-ft. disk. "The company makes good quality farm machinery. We liked the 1232 disk so much that we bought a used 1433 model. No problems after three years.

"We also like our 1994 **Ford** 8670 front wheel assist "super steer" tractor. It has more than 1,000 hours on it with no major problems."

Loyal McAfee, Shook, Mo.: "The 1994 **Belarus** 530 tractor we bought used with 55 hours on it has proved itself many times over. What impresses me the most is its fuel economy. I have two other tractors, a **Deere** 720 and an **International** 460 that I use very little now. I use the **Belarus** to do about 90 percent of my chores."

Tommy Dawson, Bryant, Ala.: "Last year I bought a late 1950's model **Farmall** 200 equipped with a 2-pt. hitch. It has a lot of power for its size and age and will pull a 2-bottom, 16-in. plow with no problem. All it needs is a new coat of paint and some decals and it'll look as good as new. I'd buy another one tomorrow if I could find one."

Douglas Marr, Plainfield, Wis.: "I use my 8 hp **DR** field and brush mower to cut weeds, brush, saplings, etc. It's easy to control and built strong."

Phil Read, Henry, Ill.: "My 1995 **Cub**

Cadet 7274 compact tractor is dependable and starts right up in cold weather when glow plugs are used. The 4-WD works excellent when pulling a rear mount blade or 2-bottom plow. This tractor is easy to mount and dismount and has controls that are positioned well."

Gary Hagen, Amery, Wis.: "I really like my **Walder** silage shaper that I first read about in **FARM SHOW** (Dan and Mark Walder, 1525 S. Cty. Rd. I, Wittenberg, Wis. 54499 ph 715 454-6458). It makes self-sealing stacks on flat ground or it can be mounted on the walls of a bunker silo. The piles are 32 ft. wide and can be up to 150 ft. long. It consists of a 32-ft. wide, 16-ft. high metal truss lined with nylon canvas. A silo blower blows silage into the 'shaper'. You keep filling and moving the unit ahead until you've got the stack as big as you want. The silage packs itself, like in an upright silo. It allows us to store almost any amount of silage we want at a very reasonable price."

Dick Collins, Collins Harvesting, Mitchell, S. Dak.: "Our two 1996 **Deere** 9600 combines work well even in weedy fields and tough conditions. We recently bought two new **Deere** bean flex heads for them that also performed well. My only complaint is that they need to improve the slip clutches and also make the augers out of heavier material.

"We recently bought two 1997 **Case-IH** 2188 combines and like them, too. We've operated IH and Case-IH combines ever since 1980 and have had good luck with them. Company support has always been good. I do think the company needs to enlarge the feederhouse on these particular models. We use all of our combines to harvest wheat, corn, soybeans, sunflowers, milo, millet, and oats."

Randy Lake, Calcium, N.Y.: "I've owned **Bobcat** skid steer loaders for more than 20 years and they seem to get better with each year. My 1995 853 model has no bad habits and is a real money maker. It's available with a wide variety of attachments which allows me to do a lot of different jobs fast.

"I haven't had any problems with my **Deere** 450G dozer in almost 10 years."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his two **Ford** E-350 Econoline vans. "They're both equipped with 7.3-liter diesel engines and automatic transmissions. They don't start well and one of them has gone through two transmissions. Also, they get poor mileage and the brakes wear out prematurely."

Raymond Sipple, Alexandria, Ky.: Raymond's the satisfied owner of a 1989 **Kubota** B2150 4-WD hydrostatic drive garden tractor equipped with a front-end loader. "It has more than 1,100 hours on it with no problems. We use it to do a lot of different jobs including loading 750-lb. round bales on trailers, driving posts, rototilling, mowing, light bush hogging, spraying, raking hay, and digging work with the loader. We have to be careful on hillsides because it's built narrow for mowing, but it's equipped with turf tires so it can go anywhere up or down hills. It really works great for driving posts because I can back it up almost anywhere and it's narrow enough to fit between trees. The loader can be used to level the entire rig in order to make up for shortness in the post driver linkage. No leaks of any kind yet."

J.A. Schmenk, Ottawa, Ohio: He's impressed with his 1992 **Yetter** 6700 weight transfer no-till bar. "If you like your present pull-type drill, this is the most economical way to start using it in minimum or no till conditions. The toolbar adjusts to fit in front

of any pull-type drill and uses your tractor's weight to help the coulters penetrate the soil. A part broke the first season but the dealer replaced it promptly. Works great."

John D. Gibson, Blairsville, Penn.: "I like my 1995 **Polaris** 400 2-WD 4-wheeler ATV. However, ordering parts for it is a real trial. I put 1,549 miles on this machine when the piston skirt blew off. I ordered the parts on August 11 and am still waiting for them. They're supposedly on back order. You'd think the company would provide better parts service."

Richard Gilda, Bellingham, Wash.: "My worst buy is my 1995 **Posi Track** by ASV which is a low ground pressure, rubber-tracked machine. When I first used it I thought that it was the best buy I'd ever made. I was told that the tracks would have a life of 2,000 to 2,500 hours. However, I got only 800 hours of use out of them before they wore out. I had been told that new tracks would cost about the same as two sets of skid steer tires. However, the actual cost was about \$5,600. The tracks won't stay on side hills. There were a lot of other problems too. For example, the 3-pt. hitch broke off and the hydraulic motor went out. Worst of all is the attitude of the manufacturer and representative, etc."

William C. McMillen, Marlon Center, Pa.: "My **Bush Hog** rotary mower is my worst buy. I had to rebuild the frame and re-weld almost all the 3-pt. hitch. It's not built heavy enough for mowing pasture even when it's driven by a careful operator."

Sandy Jackson, Etowah, Tenn.: "The **Westendorf** TA26 front-end loader that I mounted on my **Deutz** 6807 tractor is a pleasure to operate. It takes only 3 to 5 minutes mount or dismount, switching from the bucket to a bale spear can be done in even less time. I don't believe I could tear it up if I wanted to.

"My **Powder River** cattle handling equipment is indestructible.

"I've had problems with the bell housing on my 1985 **Ford** F-250 4-WD diesel pickup. The pivot mechanism for the clutch broke out and I had to re-weld it. It checks OK when bolted down and indicated on a milling machine, but the clutch plates now last only 20,000 miles. Otherwise I like it."

Burnett Isham, Mazon, Ill.: If you traveled to the Farm Progress Show near Seneca Falls, Ill., in September you may have seen



the big sign Burnett put up on his farm alongside one of the main routes to the show. It said "Don't Buy Armstrong Tires" and had a painting of a big lemon in one corner.

Burnett bought eight 18.4 by 38 **Armstrong** bias-ply tires for his **Deere** 8630 4-WD tractor four years ago. "I paid almost \$5,000 for these tires and was able to get only three seasons of use out of them before they wore out. I used the tractor to pull a heavy disk in my corn fields. The problem is that the stubble damaged the rubber between the treads. I noticed excessive wear on the tires after the first season I used them. I made several calls to the dealer with no results and was finally told to call the company. Someone at the company told me that the rubber

on the tires was soft because it hadn't yet cured, and that the problem wouldn't get any worse.

"However, the next season the problem did get much worse. I called the company again and was told that the tires were now too old for warranty coverage. I got one more season out of them last year. I didn't use them this year because in spots the rubber between the treads was worn down to the cords and I was afraid to use them. Now the tires are worthless and I can't even give them away, even though the treads themselves are still good and look like new.

"I've been farming for 25 years and this is definitely my worst buy ever. I've learned a lesson - I might have saved a few bucks but I paid for it in the end."

An anonymous custom harvester from Oklahoma.: "We traded in our six 1995 **Deere** 9600 combines for six 1997 **Gleaner** R62 combines. We were fairly satisfied with the 9600's except that grain loss on the walkers was excessive in some crop conditions unless we moved slowly. As competitive as the custom harvest business is, it limits our ability to turn a reasonable profit. I think companies need to restrain price increases on today's combines and offer combines with more capacity without enlarging the overall profile of the machine. We traded for **Gleaners** because **Deere** is getting too independent - they sometimes forget that the customer put them where they are today. We try to replace our combines every year if we can. We found that we were able to trade for **Gleaners** for less money than we could for new **Deere** models."

O.W. Wing, Gerald, Mo.: "My 1994 **Reese** 6-ft. 9-in. mower equipped with a spreader attachment has been trouble-free. The blades on the drums are easy to change. No problems and no repairs after three years of use."

Dennis Maynard, Stewartville, Mo.: "I recently traded my **Deere** 755 tractor in for a new 1996 **Deere** 955 model. The 755 was wonderful in every way but I wanted a tractor with more power. The 955 is a compact utility model that works just as good as the 755 but has twice as much power. It's a dream to operate. It handles a loader and backhoe perfectly."

Trasa S. Robb, Newark, Ohio: "We're well pleased with our 1988 **Commuter** 4 by 5 ATV. It's a 4-WD machine with a single non-driven wheel in front. This is the exact same machine as the 4 by 5 **Deere** Gator except that it's painted red and black. We bought ours about nine years ago for about \$2,800 which at the time was about \$400 less than the price of the **Deere** Gator. For the money it was by far the best utility vehicle around at the time. Unfortunately, about six years ago **Deere** contracted with another company to build the 4 by 6 Gator and **Commuter** quit making this machine. We still use ours every day and haven't had any problems with it. It goes great in mud or snow and we can haul almost anything in the dump bed. It has two toolboxes which is very handy. We've had to make only minor repairs to it. We can still get parts for it from our **Deere** dealer."

John Pollock, McAlester, Okla.: "My 1994 **Dodge** pickup equipped with a **Cummins** diesel engine is very reliable. I use it over the road a lot and so far have driven more than 244,000 miles without one serious problem. With proper care I think the engine will last more than 500,000 miles.

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