

Best & Worst Buys

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When I bought the pickup it was rated at 175 hp and on a recent dyno test it still delivered 174 hp. It gets a constant 19.5 mpg empty and 9 to 15 mpg loaded depending on the load and wind conditions. The wind is the greatest factor.

"After the original tires wore out at 43,000 miles I installed **Michelin** 10-ply radial tires. They lasted 99,600 miles. I replaced them with another set and they're still fine at 101,000 miles and it appears they'll last another 10,000 to 20,000 more miles. The cost to run these tires comes to less than 1/2 cent per mile."

Gerrit Douma, Charlotte, Mich.: "It's the most comfortable tractor to operate that I've ever owned," says Gerrit about his 1997 **Deere** 6200 L MFWD tractor. "It developed one small oil leak as a result of improper installation of the O ring between the oil pump and housing. The dealer promptly took care of it."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1995 **Dodge** Ram 2500 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and automatic transmission. "At 49,000 miles the transmission had to be overhauled. The company said they 'might' cover 'part' of the cost if the dealer determined that the problem developed as a result of defective workmanship or material. I ended up taking it to a local mechanic who charged me about a third as much as the dealer would have. My next truck will have a manual transmission."

Larry Sabaski, Packwood, Iowa: "This tractor is built right from the ground up," says Larry, impressed with his 1992 **Case-IH** Magnum 7120 tractor which he bought new in 1994. "It has a quiet and comfortable cab and the engine has a lot of power with more than ample low-end torque. The powershift transmission shifts smooth and has 18 well-spaced gear ranges. In 1,500 hours of use it has been back to the dealer just once for a shift cable adjustment. Good job, engineers."

"Another best buy is my subscription to **FARM SHOW**. It's probably the only farm magazine that I read from cover to cover, but only after my two sons let me have it. Keep up the good work."

"My worst buy is my 1990 **Case-IH** 3206 disc mower. My first experience with it wasn't disappointing at all. It had unbelievable mowing capacity. Then piece by piece it just started falling apart. The drive pulley would slide on the driveshaft, the curtain support broke and fell into the discs, the discs would come off, and knives go flying. Also, to work on it you needed both metric and SAE wrenches so crescent wrenches and pliers become standard tools. This mower was not made by Case-IH - maybe that's the problem."

Beth Heller, Branch, Mi.: Beth's impressed with her 1995 **New Holland** 640 round baler. "It does the job."

Chester F. Kantosky, Grafton, Ohio: "I like my **Wheelhorse** 10 hp riding mower. It's not fancy but it's a reliable machine that handles well."

Roy Hollenstein, Canyon, Texas: Roy's the owner of a "best buy" 1992 **Ford Versatile** 846 tractor. "It's simple and easy to work on. I've had few problems with it. It has a lot of power and good lugging ability. My wife also enjoys driving it."

Darrell Aldrich, Excelsior Springs, Mo.: "Our **Yetter** Seed Jet pull-type bulk seed cart is by far the best buy we've made lately. It automatically delivers seed up to the planter or drill. It's a great back saver and beats handling seed bags."

Vance Vesco, Lovelock, Nev.: Vance likes his 1996 **Hesston** 4755 mid-size baler. "After two years of baling it has failed to tie

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the bale properly only once. It bales beautifully in drier hay and has a lot of capacity."

Douglas Waters, Kuhawa, Ky.: "I bought my 1983 **Ford** F-350 pickup used with 60,000 miles. It has more than 215,000 miles on it now and is still going strong."

"I'm also impressed with the 1978 **Ford** 3/4-ton 4-WD pickup that I bought used. It has more than 170,000 miles on it."

Arnold W. Heeren, German Valley, Ill.: "I'm happy with my 1996 **Chevrolet** pickup equipped with a 305 cu. in. engine. It did have some recalls. The tailgate didn't fit and the horn shorted out. I had to have the horn and air bag replaced. The front bumper strip didn't fit right and the hood latch was defective. The dealer took care of all these problems."

Michael Krol, Williamstown, Ontario: Michael's impressed with his 1997 **Deere** 980 field cultivator equipped with a coil tine harrow. "It leaves a smooth seedbed and will handle any amount of residue. It even pulled through conditions where my Soil Saver plugged up last fall."

Jeff Heiser, Vesper, Wis.: "I purchased a used 1996 **Deere** 6400 MFWD tractor with 700 leased hours on it. It has a lot of power and the cab has a good view. It's a joy to drive."

Earl D. Ming, Sandy, Ore.: "My 1996 **DeWalt** 14.4-volt battery-operated drill and circular saw are both best buys. I've used the saw to cut rafters and plywood on a 76 by 26-ft. shop that I'm building. I've used the drill to put in hundreds of screws. Both tools perform flawlessly."

"My 1996 **Dodge** Ram 150 heavy 1/2-ton 2-WD pickup is my worst buy. The rear springs were too light. I had to add overload springs on the pickup so I could haul 600 lbs. in the bed. I've gone through three sets of pads on the front brakes but none on the rear. The front wheels slide a lot whenever I have to do heavy braking. The company says the dealer should take care of the problem, but the dealer won't help. I've used my 1985 and 1989 Dodge pickups to do the same tasks that I do with the 1996 model. They have 170,000 miles on them so it has to be the truck, not me."

"My 1994 **Polaris** 400 2-cycle and **Polaris** 425 4-cycle 4-WD ATV's are both worst buys. We cover them during the wet season to keep out moisture but they still don't run properly and foul the plugs. They smoke and belch but the dealer says that's normal. The machines do run during dry weather."

Rod Slotten, Verona, Wis.: "My **Power King** garden tractor mower (which is also sold under the Snapper brand) is an

excellent mower. We've abused this mower with a lot of heavy work but it has held up well. I get even more work out of it now since I affixed a piece of channel iron to the 3-pt. hitch. I bolted a hook to the end of it. Works great for lifting fenceposts, overloaded trailer tongues, pulling out brush, and other jobs where a full-size tractor would tear up the ground."

"I also own a **Dixon** zero turn mower. If you have a lot of obstacles to mow around, the Dixon is the machine to get the job done quickly with no time wasted backing around. You're cutting grass all the time. No need to go over ground you've already cut. It's not as good on long straight-aways (we operate a private airport) because the ride is rougher when you go fast."

Fred M. Schrader, West Lafayette, Ind.: Fred likes his 1995 **Deere** 455 garden tractor. "The diesel engine has a lot of power. It can be equipped with a smooth cutting 54-in. deck or a 54-in. snow blade. I use the blade to clear snow off my 500-ft. driveway. When equipped with tire chains and 300-lb. rear weights it can handle 3 1/2-ft. high snow drifts with no problem. It's comfortable to drive, and after operating it for more than 200 hours I haven't had to repair anything."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists the **Fuller** "Super 10" transmission in his 1997 Peterbilt semi truck. "I test drove the truck before I bought it and noticed that when I shifted the transmission sometimes made a grinding noise. The salesman said the noise would quit with more use. At this point the truck had 45 miles on it. I ran the truck for two weeks and the problem got worse. The dealer messed with it for 2 1/2 weeks before putting in a new transmission. However, it isn't much better than the old one."

Thomas Biddle, Geddes, S. Dak.: "My **Deere** 787 and 1850 air seeders are both best

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buys. I can put however many bushels of grain I want in them, set them, and go. The 787 seeder plants very accurately - the monitor tells me if I'm overplanting or underplanting. By watching the monitor I can empty the hopper down to the last 1-gal. pailful and still be seeding properly. The 1850 seeder is the same as the 750 drill. I can fold it up and be on the road in only about 30 seconds without having to get out of the cab to hook or unhook any pins."

"I converted the single wing tires to dual caster wheels to better support the weight of the markers on both ends of the drill."

"My **Deere** 7200 tractor equipped with a 740 front-end loader is a best buy. It's a great improvement over the Deere 2950 and Farmhand loaders I had been using. It has controls that are easy to reach, and a hydraulic system that works faster and better than the one on my old tractor. Also, the loader is built a lot heavier."

Mark and Warren Pifer, Reynoldsville, Pa.: "It makes manure hauling fun," say Mark and Warren about their 1997 **Meyer** R series twin expeller manure spreader. "The twin expellers do a great job of spreading pen pack and semi solid manure and they do it fast. This is the first spreader we've had that could spread pen pack manure since the old Deere ground-driven model we used 35 years

ago. No problems so far, and if it continues to hold up it'll be the best spreader we've ever owned."

Mark Pennington, Mildmay, Ontario: "My **Pequea** 710 hay tedder shortens the time our hay is out in the field, which results in high quality dry hay. It has provided two years of trouble-free service. I only wish I'd have bought it a long time ago."

Darrell Younghans, Meinsburg, Alberta: Darrell's impressed with his 1994 **Agco Allis** 9630 front wheel assist tractor. "It took 500 hours before I got the feel of this tractor, but once I did I became impressed with the simple design of the gear shift pattern. It's a great loader tractor. The Deutz air-cooled engine has a lot of lugging power and, combined with the tractor's hefty weight, allows this tractor to outpull other brands with higher horsepower."

Glenn Morrison, Winterset, Iowa: "My 1996 **Deere** 870 tractor is easy to operate and works great for pulling my dolly wheel hay rake. Even when it runs at high rpm's it's so quiet that I can almost hear myself think. I also use it to pull wagons, operate an elevator, pull a harrow, and do other small jobs. The company should build these tractors equipped with rubber tracks for use on truck farms. Also, I wish it could be equipped with a mid-mount sicklebar so that I wouldn't have to constantly look back while mowing. The tractor is easy on fuel, too. Once the engine overheated, but a new thermostat solved that problem."

"My **Ford** F-150 1/2-ton 4-WD pickup is my worst buy. It's built cheap and is too light in back. It must have been built from old Coca Cola cans. I think Ford and Chevy are competing with each other just to sell pickups to city people, emphasizing the pickup's looks and so-called fuel economy. When I'm ready to buy another pickup I'll go with **Dodge** and their Cummins diesel engine. At least they finally woke up and listened to the needs of farmers, who use pickups as work vehicles."

Stuart James, Hammond, Ill.: "My **Case-IH** 4800 field cultivator does a good job of going through trash. It tills evenly and tillage depth is easy to set."

Lorne Orr, London, Ontario: "I purchased a 30 by 70-ft. **Cover-All** shelter for my cows last November and it's my best buy (Econo-Shelter, RR 1, Lucknow, Ontario N0G 2H0 or P.O. Box 256, Clarinda, Iowa 51632). It was easy to put up. My son and I did most of the work and called in some neighbors to help put the cover on. We used round bales of soybean straw to close in one end and the sides. The structure weathered several severe storms last winter. It's very economical compared to a conventional building"

Robert F. Colebank, Flemington, W. Va.: Robert's pleased with his 1995 **Agco Allis** 4650 4-WD tractor. "It's comfortable to operate and has controls that are well placed and convenient to use. No problems. I enjoy operating it more than any other tractor I've ever had."

Elvin P. Graybill, Nottingham, Pa.: "My best buy is my **Deere** 4230 tractor which I bought used six years ago. It works fine and is big enough to handle a chisel plow, yet nimble enough to handle a Haybine."

Paul and Karen Dotterer, Union Bridge, Md.: They say their 1995 **New Holland** 2450 haybine is their "best buy". "It handles smooth and lets us cut alfalfa fast, which is important when you have a lot of haylage to get in fast. It's one of the best pieces of machinery we've ever purchased."