

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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mower deck is my best buy. Bewides mowing and doing bucket work, I also use this tractor to operate my generator with its pto. I built a cab for it so I can use it to plow snow."

Neil Klingelhoter, Randallstown, Md.: "I'm impressed with my 1997 Bobcat 843 skid steer loader. It's equipped with twin round bale spears and can handle two 500-lb. bales with ease. It makes unloading and storing hay much easier than if I was using a loader tractor. It works fast, is easy to maneuver, and can just nudge the bale when storing it which makes for a neat and safe operation. We're in the process of adding another skid loader to our haying operation."

Mike Yutzy, Dundee, Ohio: "My Bixby Maxfire 115 corn burning stove is my best buy. I like its simple push button ignition and



the automatic clinker ejection system. I also like being able to fill the hopper with almost two bushels of fuel, without having to worry about refilling it more than once a day. That's with the stove turned up all the way. And of course, it helps keep our gas bill down."

Joe Strueder, Franksville, Wis.: "I received a John Deere tractor sound clock as a gift and, even though I didn't buy it, it's a



disappointment. It features 12 of the most notable Deere tractors, past and present. Every hour on the hour an authentic tractor sound of one of the twelve featured tractors will play. I was excited to hear the sounds of the different tractors but I got nothing but static. They all just sound like scratches."

Lonnie Merriott, Muleshoe, Texas: "My 1973 Kubota L210 tractor equipped with a 2-cyl. engine has been trouble-free. I paid \$80 to get the 12-volt generator repaired, \$92 to get the starter repaired, and \$40 for a new head gasket which I replaced myself."

Peter Bucci, Hebron, Ct.: "My 2001 Dodge Ram 2500 4-WD, 4-door shortbed pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine is the best truck I've ever owned. It has more than 115,000 miles with no major problems. Works great for pulling heavy trailers up to 14,000 lbs."

Irwin Z. Nolt, Jr., New Holland, Penn.: "My best buy is my Bobcat 763 G skid steer loader equipped with a cab. I bought this unit used at an auction when it was two years old with 2,000 hours on it. Now it has about 3,000 hours with few repairs. I use it to move dirt, break concrete, sweep, and as a grabbing bucket that works well for brush clean-up and for collecting logs for firewood. The view from the cab is great - the best I've ever seen."

Maurice R. Leighton, Placerville, Calif.: "In February I ordered five "Empress Splendor" trees from World Tree Technologies in Scottsville, Ariz. These fast-growing trees had been featured in FARM SHOW. My check has been cashed but I have never received my trees. I made four phone calls to the company and each time they promised immediate delivery. But nothing has ever happened. I called one more time in May and they promised to return my check but I still have not received the trees, my money or had any other contact with the company."

Bob Aubrey, Batavia, N.Y.: "My 1980's Sears garden tractor powered by a 16 hp Onan engine and equipped with a 2-speed transmission (low and high range) and 48-in. mower deck is my best buy. I bought the tractor used at a flea market for \$200 with about 1,000 hours on it. Now it has more than 2,000 hours, but it still works as good as new. This little tractor has a lot of power and is virtually indestructible - it can even pull a van with the transmission in low range. I use it with both a front and rear-mounted blade as well as a sickle mower."

"I own a newer Sears Craftsman 18 hp riding mower that's also equipped with an Onan engine and standard transmission, and

"The Onan is a wonderful engine - just touch the starter and away it goes."

it's a best buy, too. I mounted an exhaust stack on it like the ones found on bigger tractors. The Onan is a wonderful engine - you just touch the starter and away it goes. I have a pair of great twin tractors!"

Lester Rose, Yellville, Ark.: "At one time I owned a 1979 Ford F-150 pickup, which was a worst buy. I tell people I actually bought two identical pickups the same day, because it was both the first and the last Ford to ever be parked in my driveway."

"My next new truck was a 1987 Dodge D-50 which we drove for 116,000 miles in four years and four months. I loved it. We now own a 1993 Nissan Sentra which I really like. We bought it used with about 64,000 miles after it had been in an accident and restored. Now it has more than 159,000 miles, and it seems like 300,000 miles might be within its range. I've never owned such a trouble-free car. I also have a 1996 Dodge 3/4-ton diesel pickup with about 207,000 miles. It gets 23.4 mpg on the highway and can move a mountain."

Rick Etherington, Garner, Iowa: "My 2006 Universal Grain and Biomass corn burning boiler is my worst buy. I poured a concrete slab for it and set up a bulk bin, and had a heating contractor and plumber hook up the air-heating coils in our basement. The dealer was told this was a 250,000 btu heater. However, the book that covers the installation procedure was terrible and we had operating problems from the start. The boiler would shut itself down whenever the water temperature went over 180 degrees, and the bearings in the feed auger went out."

"I had to babysit this machine from the start. The boiler required upkeep every day and couldn't be trusted. My dealer was very understanding and finally took the unit back. Now we're looking for another model to replace it."

David Martin, Hamlin, N.Y.: "My Deere 455 folding grain drill is my best buy. I use it for planting peas, soybeans and wheat. It's well built and does an excellent job."

"Our Great Plains Discovator performs well. I'd certainly buy another one."

James L. Oetker, Cumming, Iowa: "My 2005 Simplicity 1823 riding mower is my worst buy. The problem is the power steering has a quarter turn of play. I took the mower back to the dealer and he called the factory rep, who told them that eight out of nine power steering units do the same thing."

"Another problem is that every time I get into heavy grass the mower's drive belt slips, unless I put belt dressing on it. I don't think the springs on the tightener are built heavy enough. This mower should have been recalled. I use it to mow our local cemetery, but it's an embarrassment because I can't drive in a straight line due to the play in the power steering."

Larry Cristo, Savanna, Ill.: A pair of overalls from USI Clothing rates as Larry's "worst buy". "I read a story on the company in FARM SHOW and ordered a pair. However, when the overalls came they were small enough to fit a young boy so I tried to call the company, but they wouldn't answer their phone or return my calls. This went on for weeks, so I called my credit card company and cancelled the charge. Lo and behold, the company finally called me. I told the company rep why I cancelled my payment. He was apologetic and asked that I give him a chance to send me the correct size. So at my own expense I returned the overalls to him and included a check for payment of a new pair in the correct size. (I couldn't use the credit card because I had already cancelled the first payment to them). He received my check, deposited it, and it cleared. A month later he called to tell me he was sending me the overalls. But a month later I still haven't received them, and they're no longer returning my calls."



David Milleville, Sanborn, N.Y.: David is a dairyman and also produces hay for the horse market. He praises the Recon 300 hay conditioner because of the way it speeds up the hay making process, and at the same time makes better quality hay (ph 800 561-0132; www.agshield.com).

"I especially like the way this conditioner keeps dust out of the hay. That's very important because horses can't tolerate dust in their hay. The old saying, 'You have to make hay while the sun shines' is as good as ever. But I find that using the Recon 300 greatly speeds up what the sun is able to do, and I end up with greener hay in a shorter period of time."

"In the past I would cut the hay and leave it on the ground for as long as three days. The Recon 300 has cut the time at least by half."

Milleville has used Recons for more than eight years and is now on his third one. "What this machine really does is give the hay an additional crimping, and at the same time it can lay windrows over on dryer ground. And since I can make the hay sooner, I end up with a greener bale," says Milleville.

Jim Dick, Mountain Lake, Minn.: "I'm 60 years old and have been farming for 38 years. My absolute worst buy in all that time is my 2004 Bush Hog zero turn model ZT 180 mower. Already, two gearboxes and two pto shafts have gone bad. Then right before the warranty expired last year, the Kohler engine started acting up. When the engine

gets warm it backfires and runs on only one cylinder. Last summer this mower spent more time in the dealer's shop than on my farm. The electronic modules, valves, carburetor, fuel filter, and fuel pump have all been replaced."

"This mower has gone to the regional Kohler distributor twice to be worked on, but nothing has changed. My dealer tells me there's nothing more they can do. I tell them to just replace the whole engine, but they won't do it. I wouldn't recommend this machine to anyone."

Raymond Thomas, Linton, Ind.: "My 1972 Deere 4020 equipped with a wide front axle is a pleasant tractor to drive. It was the last year these tractors were built. It's equipped with a powershift transmission and 95 hp diesel engine. It also has dual remote hydraulic outlets, a quick hitch, and hydraulic power brakes."

John E. Palmer, Exeter, N.H.: "My Stihl 361 chainsaw is my worst buy. It has no power and it vibrates. It had two right side cutters together that made it cut crooked. I wanted to get credit for this saw and upgrade to the next model. However, the dealer said he couldn't because too much time had passed. I have a McCulloch saw that's more than 30 years old, and it cuts better than this saw."

Matt Davis, Tehachapi, Calif.: "My 2006 Husqvarna 455 Rancher chainsaw is my best buy. It runs great and is easy to maintain. No problems."

"The 2006 6 by 8-ft. greenhouse I bought for my wife from Harbor Freight is my worst buy. I got it home only to realize the installation instructions for it were incomplete. While I was putting it together the cheap aluminum bolts kept snapping so I replaced them with steel ones. Also, the clips that are supposed to hold the panels in weren't strong enough to handle high winds so I had to glue them all in."

Myron Bentrager, Arlington, Kansas: A 1980 Versatile 835 4-WD tractor rates as Myron's "best buy". "I bought this tractor used several years ago largely because of its reputation, and it has performed well. It's simple, rugged, powerful, and reliable. I really like it. It's a much better tractor than the Case 2470 4-WD tractor that it replaced. There are a lot of these older Versatiles still being used in our area."

Louie Artmon, Greens Fork, Ind.: "My 2006 Central Boiler wood burner works great and has exceeded my expectations. I wish I had bought it five years ago. No problems."

John Slater, Olin, Iowa: John nominates his 2003 New Holland LS 170 skid loader as his "best buy". "It replaced a 1983 Case 135B model which was a good machine, but the New Holland unit is bigger and more fuel efficient. Also, it works faster, starts better, and is easier to service. It can be used with a lot of different attachments."

Don Salmen, Wessington Springs, S. Dak.: "My 1976 Hydra Mac 8B skid loader is my all-time best buy. I have no idea how many hours are on it. Both the engine and the hydrostat have been overhauled once. I use this machine several times a day and would be lost without it. When I retire and move to town it's coming with me."

Danny C. Hutto, Abbeville, Ala.: "After two years of thorough research, I recently purchased an EZ Boardwalk portable sawmill and it's my best buy (7959 Shelby 348, Emben, Mo. 63439 ph 573 633-2135). After watching demonstrations of several different mills, I found the "angle cut" design a big help in reducing the amount of force needed to move the saw blade through the log. In fact, in softer woods the blade has to be held back