

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

lawsuit so that we can get reimbursed. So far, I've been able to locate used engines but no rebuilt engines or rebuild kits. Otherwise, I think this mini truck works great."

Arthur J. Gleason, Walpole, Ma.: "My DR power wagon is my worst buy. The Briggs & Stratton engine that powers it is the worst running engine I've ever seen. Another problem is that this rig won't climb steep grades as advertised. These newer engines have no carburetor adjustments so there's no way to make them start and run better."

Ken Scharabok, Waverly, Tenn.: "Ten years and many hundreds of round hay bales after I bought it, my **Hydra-Bed** still keeps on humming along (HydraLine Products, Sabetha, Kansas ph 785 284-3674). I've had to replace some hydraulic lines on it but that's expected with any hydraulic equipment. It's nice to be able to feed out hay from a heated



cab rather than from a cold tractor seat. I've also used this unit's loading arms for many other jobs on our farm. And unlike a hired hand, this machine always shows up on a Monday."

Galen Garber, Conneautville, Penn.: "Over the years we've owned more than a dozen **Deere** tractors, ranging from a 1949 'A' to a 2005 6603 and they've all been best buys, although some have been better than others. These tractors are operator-friendly, considering when they were built, and they hold their resale value. At present, I have two models that have more than 12,000 hours on them, with no sign of quitting."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists the **Zimmerman** water bowls in his tie-stall barn. "For 10 years I bought and installed the company's updates, but they still flood the barn at regular but unpredictable intervals. I took all the bowls out and put them in the trash where they belong. I wouldn't recommend these water bowls to anyone."

Rodney Luttrell, Nebo, W. Va.: Rodney nominates his 1978 **Satoh** 650 G 4-WD tractor equipped with a 15 hp diesel engine as his "best buy". "I've used it to mow my yard, work my garden, and haul wood. It's really fuel efficient. I've overworked it and abused it and even used it to push cars, and to haul motors around. I didn't change the oil for a long time, and as a result the oil got so thick that it wouldn't even run down out of the drain hole. Yet this tractor just keeps on running. It's a great machine."

Harley Willett, Dallas, Texas: "The 2005 **Huskee** self-propelled 21-in. mulching mower I bought at Tractor Supply Company is my best buy. It's equipped with a Briggs & Stratton Intek 6 1/2 hp engine that has plenty of power and always starts on the first pull. This machine does a beautiful job of mulching, and it's sturdy and well-built."

On the negative side, he isn't happy with the **Husky** 1750 psi electric power washer he bought at Home Depot. "The model I bought had to be replaced three times before I finally gave up and asked for a refund. Customer service went through India, and replacement parts were still arriving three months after I got my refund."

Robert Lassila, Great Falls, Mt.: "In my opinion almost any 'made in China' product is a worst buy. Very few of these foreign-made tools are made rugged enough to depend on when the going gets tough. I'd rather use a 50-year-old American-made tool than

trust these imitations."

Roger Simmons, Falkville, Ala.: "My 2004 **Kubota** M8200 does everything a tractor is supposed to do."

"My 1986 **Deere** 4030 tractor is my worst buy. The hydro pump keeps blowing O-rings in the belly of the tractor, and in order to make the repair the tractor has to be broken in half. The fuel filter is located right above the starter, so if it leaks it drips down onto the starter and could cause a fire. I think that's poor engineering. I'd rather own a four-legged mule than a Deere."

Bill Guthrie, Justin, Texas: "I'm well satisfied with my 2006 **New Holland** TN70 tractor. It works as advertised and is a very strong tractor."

"The chop saw I bought from **Harbor Freight** is my worst buy. It lasted less than two cuts before it burned out. It's a piece of junk. I replaced it with a **Milwaukee** model that works great."

Don Payne, Niles, Mich.: "My **Behler** electric livestock waterer is my worst buy. To replace the heating unit and thermostat, you have to take it all off and turn it upside down. It took a week for parts to arrive, and they cost \$82. My advice when buying electric livestock waterers is to buy from a local dealer who carries parts, and make sure the heating elements are easy to install."

Tom E. Weekley, Guysville, Ohio: Tom says his 1971 **International Harvester** 454 diesel tractor, which he bought used, is his "best buy". "It's just the right size for small jobs and is powerful and agile. Easy to use and dependable."

"My 2006 **Mantis** rototiller is my worst buy. It runs and looks good but has very flimsy digging tines - if I hit the least little rock or root the tines will bend. Because of this problem I'm disappointed in the machine's overall usefulness."

Duane Lange, Ord, Neb.: "I'm a long-time no-tiller, so I raised some neighbors' eyebrows when I bought a **Phillips** 42-ft.



rotary harrow. It's definitely my best buy," says Duane. "I bought this aggressive harrow because corn stalks were damaging my tractor tires and also pulling off fertilizer hoses and seed tubes on my planter. It does an excellent job of laying down corn and sunflower stalks. It's a well-built machine."

Joe Eilert, Jewell, Kansas: Joe's impressed with his 2005 **Great Plains** 3000 series, 30-ft., 3-section grain drill. "This drill replaced our IH hoe drills, which worked well but were slow, tedious and unhandy to transport. I've used this new drill on 2,800 acres and it works great. It folds easily for transport and works great on rough cropland with high residue. The company is very customer-minded and will be around for the long haul."

Gerald W. McKeel, Noname, Colo.: "It has a step-through design and is built like a tank," reports Gerald, pleased with his 1999 **Bombardier** Traxter 500 ATV. "The engine on this unit is truly bullet-proof, although it's somewhat hard on spark plugs. The seat lifts up for easy engine maintenance. I like the rear-mounted radiator because it doesn't plug up with debris."

Ray Tuhscherer, Langley, B.C.: "I'm happy with my **New Holland** 575 baler, which I bought used. The previous owner had used it hard and it needed some tender loving care, but after making some minor repairs

For greater visibility at night, Mike Stark installed a **Pacer Performance Hi-Five** light kit on his 1997 **Ford F-150** pickup.



"Best Buy" Cab Running Lights

Last year Mike Stark of Hixton, Wis., installed a **Pacer Performance** Hi-Five running cab lights kit on his 1997 Ford F-150 pickup (Pacer Performance Products, www.pacerperformance.com). He says they're his "best buy".

"I bought the lights at Cabela's to get greater visibility at night. I'm well pleased with how they look, and I was able to install them in only a few days during my spare time. They look like they were factory-installed even though I'm just a novice weekend mechanic. I'd recommend this kit to anyone who wants to add a little light visibility for night driving and give your pickup a big rig look."

The installation instructions were fairly straightforward, says Stark, but it did take a little thought to understand them. "I can't emphasize enough the need for correct measurement because you only have one chance to get it right when you drill the holes. You have to take out the roof lining by removing visors and the inside cab dome light, and also pop out the plastic pieces that hold it in place."

"I bought my own switch which works better than the one provided with the kit. Pacer makes all kinds of add-on light kits."

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it has worked great. It has a lot of capacity and has required only routine maintenance.

"I also like my 1999 **Dodge** 3500 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine."

On the minus side, he isn't pleased with his **Zweegers** Fanex 780 hay tedder, which he bought used. "The wheel axle shafts are too light. I broke three out of a total of six. Also, the gearbox is too small and heats up badly."

Don W. Thomas, Eureka River, Alberta: "My 2001 **Dodge** 3500 pickup equipped with an in-line diesel engine and **Hydra-Dec** bale hauler-unroller is my best buy. I bought it used with the Hydra-Dec installed. This pickup now has about 151,000 miles on it. I use it to unroll bales while feeding cattle, which is hard on the clutch. It had to be replaced recently. I also use it to pull 20 and 24-ft. livestock trailers and a seven-bale wagon. I'm well pleased with it. I like the in-line diesel engine much better than a V-8 diesel."

Bill Kobiskie, Milton, Kansas: "I like my **Charmaster** wood burning furnace (Charmaster Products, Grand Rapids, Minn. ph 218 326-6786; www.charmaster.com). My home is totally electric so this furnace keeps my utility bill way down in winter. One good firing of this furnace will keep our house comfortable for up to 24 hours or more."

The Charmaster is a fully automatic forced air heating system. According to the company, it's the only wood burning furnace that will convert wood into a glowing bed of charcoal. The airtight design also creates a secondary burn of gases, consuming far less wood than other wood furnaces, says the company.

"My **Staber** washing machine is a best buy (Staber Industries, Inc., Groveport, Ohio ph 800 848-6200). It's a real soap and water saver, and is easy on clothes."

Terry Semenov, Winfield, Alberta: Terry's pleased with his 1964 **International Harvester** 660D tractor, which he bought used. "It starts good in any weather and is a handy haying tractor. I also use it to do spring work including disking and seeding. Very reliable."

Don Wooley, Lawton, Okla.: "It just keeps on mowing and mowing with no problems at all," says Don about his 2002 **Deines** OHV 1860 ZTR riding mower equipped with a 60-in. deck. "This machine is fun to use

and has required only routine maintenance. With the big deck I can mow in about three hours what used to take seven hours on my old riding mower."

Ronald Dietsche, Colfax, Wis.: "It's the best vehicle I've ever owned," reports Ronald, pleased with his 1997 **Ford** F-150 pickup. "It has about 110,000 miles on it and has done everything a farm truck can do. No maintenance other than replacing front brake pads, spark plugs and oil."

Dennis Weier, Columbus, Mich.: "It has plenty of power, is easy to drive, and starts good in cold weather," says Dennis about his "best buy" 1984 **International** 5088 tractor. "It has about 4,600 hours on it."

"My 1975 **Allis Chalmers** 7000 tractor has plenty of power and is a best buy."

"My 2001 **Deere** 4400 tractor, equipped with a model 430 front-end loader, is my worst buy. It has about 1,200 hours on it. I've had trouble with the sync reverser and transmission slipping out of gear ever since it was new. It has been back to the dealer three times. The last time it was back they told me the linkage was worn out. I expected a better product from Deere and will be looking at other brands when it's time to trade."



Autumn Bagley, Mt. Morris, Mich.: "My **Stanley** Fat Max hammer works great. It's easy to hold, has a lot of power without being heavy, with a magnetic nail setter and textured head. It makes hammer work easy."

"My **Harbor Freight** router is my worst buy. It's cheaply made. The plastic gears stripped the first time I used it, making it impossible to adjust the depth. On the plus side, there were no hassles when I returned it."

John R. Bupp, Wichita, Kansas: "My **Honda** rotor tiller starts easy with no need to mix gas and oil. It's also quiet, lightweight and powerful. Best of all, it's built with Honda quality."

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