

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Jim Lacey, Dell Rapids, S. Dak.: “Several years ago, I bought a **St. Croix** corn burner that’s built by Even Temp Mfg. Co. of Waco, Neb. These folks have been building gas furnaces for about 100 years. Their stove works well, is easy to adjust, and there’s not a lot of maintenance. I added an air filter to keep air clean that circulates into the house, and to slow down air flow over the flue pipes to strip off more heat. All in all, I was happy with it but thought I’d look for something even better.

“So I recently spent nearly \$4,000 on a **Europa** corn burner built in Canada. It was supposed to be state-of-the-art, with five heat ranges, 20 combustion air speeds, and several waste auger speeds. I discovered that setting this stove is as easy as trying to hold a 40-ft. flagpole straight up in a 40-mph wind while standing up in a canoe shooting a rapids. I called the company and talked to an engineer who said he was having the same troubles I was. So we took the stove apart, added 12 flue pipes, and tried it again. It still took a couple hours to set it and we couldn’t keep clinkers from forming and blocking the waste ash discharge augers. So we finally put the **St. Croix** stove back in and even

“My conclusion is that the stove is poorly designed. There’s too much heat transfer area, which tends to keep the fire too cold for combustion to occur properly. I have lined the entire bottom of the furnace with fire brick, which helps keep the fire hotter. I also plan to find a way to partially line the sides of the firebox as well. Another big problem is that the furnace has a drop curtain completely across the firebox. It’s a safety liability because the curtain is lower than the door opening so when you load up the furnace, you get flame and smoke coming out at you in your face. This curtain also limits the length of wood you can put in – it only takes 3-ft. lengths.

“The air supply damper door is a big part of the problem. Other manufacturers use a fan that supplies forced air when needed, rather than convection. The fire in this stove tends to choke for air and create unburned tar and creosote.”

Edward Welters, Verona, Mo.: “Our best buy is a **Minneapolis Moline G900 LP** with a loader. We have run it almost every day for 25 years with no major repairs. It’ll do most loader work at 600 to 800 rpm’s and only burns about 1 gal. per hour. The engine has good low-end torque also.

“If you don’t need over 70 hp, a **Minneapolis Moline M670** would be the cheapest thing going. It runs at only 1,400 rpm’s and has plenty of power and torque.”

Bill Justus, Denton, Texas: “I bought a new **Dale Phillips 9-ft. disk harrow** and ran it for approximately 30 min. when I noticed one gang had loose discs. I tightened it with a wrench and impact hammer but it loosened up again after a few more minutes of work. I took it 65 miles back to the dealer. He also tightened it with a wrench and I took it home, where it came loose again almost immediately. I then disassembled the gang and found out it had not been assembled correctly. The company wouldn’t do anything. They said it was my fault for adding weight, turning with it in the ground, and so on. I did none of that, although I’ve only been farming for 50 plus years so I’m sure I have things to learn. I repaired the axle and started using it again. A bracket broke on top of the frame so I welded on two heavy new brackets. The front arms then twisted and the hangar bolts broke out. I straightened them and reinforced them and since then the disk has worked fine.”

George Hardy Jr., Forest City, N.C.: “It’s a good tractor for the money and saves a lot of wear and tear on my bigger tractors,” says George about his 1998 **Mahindra 475** tractor. “It has a simple design and is very similar to Farmall tractors made during the 1970’s and 1980’s. My tractor has about 800 hours on it.”

Jeffery S. Jones, Titusville, Penn.: “Our best buy is an **International 856** tractor which we bought used. It has about 8,600 hours on it with no major breakdowns. All we do is change the oil and filters. It always starts, even in the coldest weather.

“My worst buy is my 1996 **Cub Cadet 2160** tractor. It couldn’t cut grass. The main drive belt seems to break every year at a replacement cost of about \$30, and the carburetor collects water all the time. We use the same gas in all our other equipment with no problems. Now the variable speed clutches are going out with only about 400 hours on the tractor.”

David Van Wyck, Jonesville, Mich.: David’s impressed with his 1992 **Deere 870** compact tractor equipped with a 3-cyl. diesel engine. “We use this tractor every day with no problems. It’s the most dependable piece of equipment we own.”

Ted and Darla Thompson, Thompson, Iowa: “My three **Morton** machine sheds are all good buildings. They were put up in 1971, 1978, and 2001. The one built in 2001 is an

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
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though it doesn’t have all the fancy controls, it only requires about 5 min. of maintenance a day – especially if you have a bin full of dry shelled corn running into the stove via a 3-in. plastic pipe.”

Fritz Groszkruger, Dumont, Iowa: “Our 1987 **Gehl Scavenger II 309** manure spreader is the worst product I’ve ever owned. The only material that comes out is whatever I push into the auger by hand. The company had some ideas how to fix it but all they amounted to was that conditions must be perfect or it wouldn’t work. That doesn’t cut it for a spreader that was advertised as a machine for all types of manure. If anyone has a modification that will solve the problem, I’d like to hear about it.”

Errol Borsky, Kamloops, British Columbia: “I’m disappointed with my **Classic** outside wood furnace that I bought from **Central Boiler**. I bought it to heat my 6,000 sq. ft. shop along with our 2,200 sq. ft. home. Their advertising and dealers had me convinced it was worth the extra money to pick their furnace over a competitor’s because of fuel efficiency, superior heat transfer, and workmanship.

“After I filled the boiler with 385 gal. of antifreeze mix for the first time, it began to leak. The dealer said there was no warranty on the fittings, even though it was their fittings that were leaking. I finally got the furnace drained, repaired, refilled, and fired up. But within a week the draft solenoid burned out.

“The dealer said the warranty would not cover it because I was likely burning the wrong wood. I said my wood was air-dried seasoned fir. Then they said I was putting my wood too close to the door. Yet their manual says the opposite, to rake the coals to the door and keep the fire away from the back of the furnace.