

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

his 2005 **Deere** 9760 STS combine. "I bought it during the bean harvest of 2004. It has a large wire concave for beans and did a wonderful job. No pods showed up in the grain tank. Most people use a round bar concave for harvesting both corn and beans, but they often complain when cutting beans that the beans aren't clean enough. The large wire concave that I use just for beans does a better job and results in a premium market price."

John G. Lowell, West Chicago, Ill.: John's impressed with his 2004 **Chevrolet** Tahoe equipped with a V-8 engine. "I generally 'buy American' if possible. I've taken this vehicle on several long trips and it consistently gets 19 to 21 mpg, even when I'm driving at 70 to 80 mph with the air conditioner on. It's quite fuel efficient on local trips, too. The only problem was when the rear air conditioner fan went out. However, it was promptly replaced under warranty. This vehicle rides well and has plenty of power."

John H. Peter, Scandia, Minn.: A 7-ft. **Bush Hog** 280 series rotary cutter rates as John's "worst buy". "After adjusting the



clutch and height settings, I started using this machine to cut a trail that had previously been cut with a Deere mower. Within two hours the deck was totally destroyed by the blades going through it.

"The company said I must have abused it and refused to either repair or replace the deck so I took it apart to see if I could repair it. While removing the blade holder, I found that the holder was broken off the spindle at the weld, about two thirds of the way around. I brought the spindle back to the dealer and the company agreed it was faulty and replaced it. However, they said the broken weld wasn't why the blades came up through the deck, so they still won't replace the deck, but the replacement deck costs almost half as much as a new mower. I wouldn't recommend Bush Hog equipment to anyone."

Lorne A. Hassemer, Bloomer, Wis.: Lorne nominates his 1977 **Ford** 4600 tractor as his all-time "best buy". "For 29 years this model has been the main tractor on our 240 acres. It has more than 26,000 hours on it but the engine has never been taken apart. It still doesn't use any oil, and it's easy on fuel."

Terry Sprowl, Frankenthum, Mich.: "My **Hustler** 52-in. zero turn riding mower has reduced my mowing time by half, from 3 to 1 1/2 hours. It has required only routine maintenance and the replacement of one plastic idler pulley. I bought this mower at a very reasonable price. I'd recommend it to anyone."

On the negative side, he lists his 2003 **Deere** 4310 tractor equipped with a **Deere** 430 front-end loader. "This tractor has terrible hydraulics. The loader doesn't have adequate lifting power, and both the hoist cylinders and the bucket and forks tend to drift down whenever I'm using the loader. I'm sure the problem is with the valve body, but the company either won't or can't fix it. It has been in for service three different times."

Owen Ball, Kingston, Ill.: "My 2002 **Bronco** rear tine rototiller is my worst buy. In the advertisements for this machine they show a person walking, holding on with only one hand while tilling. But if you're work-

ing in hard ground, or if you hit a rock, the tiller will jump out of the ground and fly ahead of you out of control."

Maynard Mitchell, Waynesboro, Tenn.: "My 2004 **Troy-Bilt** 54-in. cut mower is my worst buy. It fell apart the first day we used it and has already required at least four major repairs, which I made myself because we live a long distance from where we bought it. It's very difficult to repair."

Arthur R. Main, Holbrook, Penn.: "My 2005 **Polaris** Ranger 6-WD utility vehicle is a worst buy. The problem is that the transmission jumps out of gear. I had to take it back twice, once to change the rear tires. It didn't work and a part in the front end had to be changed. Now there's something wrong again."

Fred Blankenship, Rhodelia, Ky.: "My **DR** 15 hp brush mower is my best buy. I use it on my rough terrain to mow heavy grass vines, briars, and saplings. Because of the DR's 4-speed transmission, **Kawasaki** 15 hp twin cylinder engine, and 26-in. bush blade, it can easily cut all of this material. The snowblower that goes with this machine works as advertised. On the negative side, when it's equipped with the snow throwing attachment this is a heavy machine for one person to operate. It helps if you're big and strong."

Bruce Dodds, Green, Kansas: "My 2002 **Honda** Rancher ATV equipped with an electric shift transmission and fan-type oil cooler is my best buy. I use it for checking cows and haul it around on a 2-wheel trailer. If I want, I can also pull the trailer behind the 4-wheeler. I use this machine whenever I move machinery to the field. I have a hitch on back of my big baler so I can take the ATV along."

Bill Yancey, Arlington, Tenn.: "My 2000 **Volkswagen** Jetta has provided reliable service and gets up to 53 mpg. If just half the drivers in the U.S. switched to more fuel efficient vehicles, fuel prices would drop like a rock."

On the minus side, he lists his 2003 **Ford** F-350 pickup equipped with a 6-liter diesel engine. "It has spent a lot of hours at two different Ford dealers due to problems with a leaky air conditioner, an EGR valve, the clutch pedal, hydraulic system, and other issues. It isn't very fuel efficient even when driving at low engine rpm's."

Joaquin Heard, Boyce, Va.: "My 2002 **Deere** 790 tractor equipped with a **Deere** 419 front-end loader is my best buy. The loader is awesome. I use it to move snow and to grade a gravel road.

"I've used my 1990 **Stihl** 028 chain saw to cut more than 200 cords of wood and it's a best buy. One time I accidentally ran over the saw with my truck, but it still cuts great anyway."

"My **Troy-Bilt** push-type weed eater is my worst buy. It wouldn't cut for three minutes without throwing cutting twine off. This weed eater is impossible to push on anything other than smooth, level ground."

Marley Drewelow, Rock City, Ill.: Marley likes his **Raingo** vinyl gutter and downspout system (Genova Products, Davison, Mich. ph 810 744-4500). "I installed this gutter system on my new machine shed in 1989. I was so pleased with its performance that I installed the system on my house when I replaced the shingles and gutters in 1993. If a tree limb falls on these gutters, or a half ton of ice, they'll snap right back into shape, usually without any damage. If breakage should occur, you simply snap out the damaged part and snap in a new piece."

Larry Hurley, Yantis, Texas: A 1985 **Deere** 300B industrial backhoe, bought used three years ago, rates as Larry's "best buy". "It only had 1,282 hours on it when I bought

it. My neighbor also has two 1970's model **Deere** industrial backhoes. We have a complete set of manuals for each machine. **Deere's** technical writers were really good. These machines are simple to fix and parts for them are available at all ag and industrial dealers."

Marion E. Carter, Frenchburg, Ky.: "My **Deere** Gator is by far the handiest vehicle I've ever owned. I can't see how anyone could set up housekeeping without this ma-



chine. It serves as a small pickup and as a general, all-around utility vehicle. It starts right up and will run forever on a tank of gas. It'll go about anywhere on our farm. My son bought it for me and I'm just as pleased as a young mother. We can even ride it to church on Sunday."

John E. Hampton, Taylor Ridge, Ill.: "My 2000 **Kubota** 2710 model B tractor and 72-in. belly mower are my best buys. I use them to mow 15 acres, usually twice a week. The mower does a nice, even job of cutting. Most of the time I run it right at 8 mph. The only repair it has needed was a new deck belt. It really does a good job."

Lowell Regehr, Manhattan, Kansas: "My 2002 **Dodge** Sprinter cargo van is trouble-free and my best buy. It's equipped with a 5-cyl. turbocharged diesel engine and electronic automatic Mercedes-Benz transmission. This vehicle is fun to drive and gets

a decent 20 mpg."

Robert H. Tapp, Jr., Mason, Tenn.: "My 1997 **Case** IH MX 110 front wheel assist tractor was a worst buy. The front end went out twice under warranty, and then about one hundred hours later it went out for a third time after the warranty had expired. It cost about \$4,000 to repair. About 100 hours later the front housing had to be replaced at a cost of about \$3,000. Shortly afterward I traded for a Deere."

Russell Rogotzke, Springfield, Minn.: Russell likes his **New Holland** Boomer TC25D tractor equipped with a front-end loader and backhoe. "At first I wondered where I would store the loader when I wasn't using it. However, it wasn't long before I was using the loader almost every day for some job. It's very handy. This tractor has only 25 hp and hydrostatic drive, but even so I can use it to pull a gravity box loaded with 12,000 lbs. of seed out in the field, and to operate the gravity box's auger to fill our grain drill. I have many uses for the backhoe, including small tiling jobs. I add more than 1,000 ft. of tile every year."

James Bildilli, Springfield, Ill.: "I like my **Milwaukee** 18-volt cordless drill and sawzall. The Milwaukee line of tools outperforms and outlasts all other brands that I've tried. They're built rugged and can take a lot of abuse. They have a lot of torque, and the batteries seem to last longer than on most other brands."

Lue Reynolds, Pequot Lakes, Minn.: "My 2005 9-wheel, in-line **Tonutti** T9 hay rake is my best buy. It does a good job of raking and is easy to grease. It's also easy to pull and built heavy."

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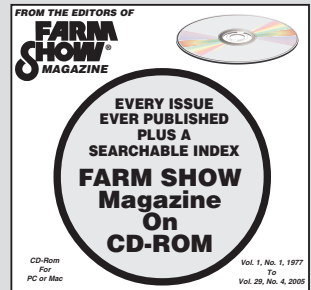
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