

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
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Arco Rosenow, Chillicothe, Ill.: “At about 90,000 miles the transmission on my 1994 Dodge Ram pickup equipped with a V-6 engine started acting up. Three different dealers looked at it and said it needed to be rebuilt, at a cost of about \$1,500. I took it to a local mechanic and for \$75 he did a full transmission flush and it has shifted perfectly ever since and now has more than 146,000 miles on it with no other shop time other than oil changes. Flushing differs from an oil change in that all components, including the torque converter, are cleaned by flushing a cleaner through while the truck is running and going through shift cycles while on the rack. You can actually watch the oil become cleaner.”

Bill Moore, Cambridge, Neb.: A 2005 **Orthman** “1tRIPer” preplant tillage tool rates as Bill’s “best buy” (Orthman Mfg., Inc., Lexington, Neb. Ph 308 324-7555). The tool combines strip-till soil management, precision nutrient placement, and seedbed preparation in a single field pass. It can be used as a stand-alone machine or with the Orthman combo caddy or a planter attachment package to combine multiple operations in one pass. It’s available in 4 to 16-row configurations.

tection mechanism built into it so that when shifting from forward to reverse, sometimes it pauses and sometimes it doesn’t, making it hard to tell whether to set the planter down or wait for the tractor to decide which way it’s going. Any time the tractor is under load, when I’m shifting from eighth to ninth gear, it jerks really hard. I can’t believe Deere can get away with rating this tractor at 375 hp because it has no reserve power. It can’t pull on a really long grade under load without giving up. Our dealer has been great to work with, but the company apparently does not care if we ever buy any more of its equipment.”

Eugene Sellers, Trout Run, Penn.: “My 2003 **Dodge** 4-WD dually pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and 6-speed transmission is my best buy. It has more than 68,000 miles on it but has been totally trouble-free. I had a complete Banks power system installed and the truck now does everything I ask, almost effortlessly. Since I bought this pickup, its fuel efficiency has improved almost 2 mpg. I replaced the Goodyear Wrangler tires on the rear at 62,000 miles. The front tires still had almost 3/4 tread.”

Don Sharow, Camp Point, Ill.: “My 2001 **Polaris** Magnum 4-WD ATV is my best buy. Cold or hot weather, it always starts right up. And if I let the battery run down, I can use a pull start that stays out of the way when not needed. It has an automatic transmission so I don’t have to worry about shifting, and also has a high-low range. I’m totally amazed at its pulling power and great traction in low range. I use it to pull home-built 4 by 6-ft., 2-wheeled carts with 32 cu. ft. capacity each. I can load four of them with firewood, and use my Polaris to haul this ‘train’ of carts with ease. In high range I can out-manuever and outrun any of my hard-headed cows. I use this machine to check fences, haul firewood, and to get rid of frustrations and just go zooming along on some trails I carved out of our woods. I have a handicap, and this ATV allows me to access places on our farm that I otherwise couldn’t reach if I had to walk there. Work or play, it’s the most FUNctional machine on our farm.”

Steve Corbin, Fort Pierce, Fla.: “It’s a very reliable machine,” says Steve, happy with his 1994 **Gravely** Promaster 300 riding mower - a hydrostatic drive, front-mounted mower with rear steering and a zero turning radius. “Other than normal maintenance on items such as belts, blades, and filters, the only thing I’ve ever had to replace was the coil. It’s a blast to use and so maneuverable that it cut my mowing time in half compared to the previous machine I had been using. It cuts so close that I don’t have to use my string trimmer very often.”

E. J. Tippen, Kennett, Mo.: “After using **Dixon** mowers for 26 years I became a dealer. The company is downsizing and cutting back, but their mowers are upsizing and getting heavier so after getting a heavy **Dixie** Chopper I designed and built a lift to help me. I got one and liked it so well I built another so I can lift both front and back.”

Frank S. Fowler, Gatlinburg, Tenn.: “It works as good as advertised,” says Frank, pleased with his **DR** 15 hp brush trimmer. “It’ll cut right through 1-in. tree saplings with no problem at all. This machine won’t lug down even in the heaviest grass or brush. It’s the best off-the-shelf machine I’ve had in more than 50 years of farming.”

Robert VonKamp, Collins, Ohio: Robert’s pleased with the **Uniroyal** Tiger Paw AWP tires on his Chevrolet S10 pickup. “These tires were brand new on the pickup when I bought it used in 1998. Now they have more than 97,000 miles on them and could still go another 30,000 to 40,000 miles. All I do is keep them properly inflated and rotate

“It does a superb job of making a seedbed in high residue,” says Moore. “It never plugs up, even in 240 bu. per acre corn residue. But on the negative side, the company uses really poor bearings in all the coulters on this machine. The ripper shank is made of mild steel and bends in hard ground without hitting any kind of an obstacle. In planting 5,000 acres we broke one shear bolt and bent 30 shanks. And we had to replace 30 bearings. The hydraulics used on the caddy machine are so poor it doesn’t lift evenly. This uneven lift eventually wore out the clevis on the lift cylinders.”

Marc Rasmussen, Cambridge, Neb.: Marc’s disappointed with his 2005 **Deere** 9320 tractor equipped with a powershift transmission and a 3-pt. hitch. “We had barely put 30 hours on the machine, when the tractor would no longer move because a microswitch on the clutch pedal started to stick. After we installed a set of saddle tanks, the company said they would void the warranty unless we took the tanks off and installed a set of frame stiffeners.

“But our real trouble began when we started to plant using an Orthman 1tRIPer strip-till rig tied to our planter. The tractor has a Cat. I 3-pt. hitch with poor capacity. Any time the nose of the tractor goes over a hump it won’t pick up the Orthman rig. At 151 hours the frame of the tractor gave out causing the tractor to buckle in half. The company blamed the problem on soft metal, but about 10 bolts is all that holds the front and back halves of the tractor together. At 200 hours the top link on the 3-pt. hitch broke while we were raising the machine at the end of the field, dropping the planter. The bolts that hold the pins in on the quick hitch broke and the pins worked themselves out of the hitch.

“The powershift transmission has a pro-