

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

them maybe once a year if I happen to think of it. I'm putting them on all my vehicles."

**Mike Brandner, Brandner Dairy, Medford, Wis.:** "We nominate our Agco 9745 tractor as our worst buy. We had a set hourly lease on this tractor, but in three years it was in the dealer's shop for warranty work three months out of the year. Finally, when it was in the shop for the entire spring planting season, we let it go back and didn't pay the final lease payment. We tried to trade it off, but the dealer wouldn't take it in trade since he 'didn't want two angry customers'."

"Now Agco Finance says they're not part of Agco Allis (contrary to dealer comments when the initial purchase was made) and wants financial compensation. What a joke - this tractor was useless. We were forced to rent tractors to do our fieldwork because the tractor never worked. We have a stack of warranty work orders totaling about \$24,000 - from computer problems to air conditioning problems. The list was endless. The way in which the company treated us left much to be desired. I can say for certain that we'll never purchase another piece of Agco Allis equipment."

**Laverne Hoefer, Petersburg, Neb.:** "Last year we had irrigated corn that was knocked down across the row, 100 percent flat. It was 6 to 7 ft. tall and thickly planted. We used our Deere 9500 combine equipped with a 6-row head to try to harvest it. However, we would go in only about 150 ft. before the corn head would be covered 2 ft. deep, totally plugged up."

"It was half an hour before dark when I remembered something that I had read in FARM SHOW. I had my son go home and cut some sickle sections off the blade, saving the part with rivet holes in them. The rectangular pieces are 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 in. wide. He attached these pieces to the auger flighting on our grain head with two self-tapping screws. The pieces extend about 1/4 in. to 3/8 in. out from the edge of the flighting. Fifteen minutes later we had them on. We made one round in a field that was a half mile long and we never had to stop. We picked two semi truck loads in the dark after that at 3 to 3 1/2 miles per hour. The crop flowed through like a carpet. There was some shelling of the ears, but the kernels fell in the pan under the auger with no loss of grain. It was unbelievable. Total modification cost: less than \$5."

**G. Ferguson, Cochin, Sask.:** "My 1964 Massey Ferguson tractor is still going strong. It has been an outstanding best buy."

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**Eugene Ostman, Mackinaw City, Mich.:** Eugene's not happy with his Crestline factory-built home. "I purchased a brand new factory-built home from Crestline that cost more than \$100,000. At the time of the purchase I upgraded the windows to get the best they offered. Recently, one of the windows fell out. When I investigated I found the wood on that window, and on all the windows, had completely rotted. The dealer that I purchased the home from won't stand behind it. After checking into the matter I found there are many other people who have had the same experience."

**Mike Widhalm, Hoskins, Neb.:** "My 1996 Dodge Ram 3500 dually 4-WD equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and a 5-speed transmission is my best buy. It has

been a trouble-free workhorse since I bought it."

On the "worst buy" side, "I bought a Gateway computer in 2001. It was returned to the factory twice because it would 'lock up'. They never did fix it so I bought a Dell 2400 and it works great."

**Dale Hazelton, New Hampton, N.Y.:** Dale nominates his Miracle Truss 24 by 48-ft. steel frame building as his "best buy". "The truss system allowed me to assemble the entire building by myself. The only help I needed was to hire someone to hoist the large trusses overhead with a boom. The rest of the work I did by myself, basically with a saw and a cordless drill/driver. It's a clear span building that has already withstood a 24-in. deep snow load. It was a bit more expensive than a wood outbuilding, but it was worth the extra cost."

A 2003 Snapper self-propelled riding mower rates as his "worst buy". "The drive system slips on rough terrain or hills. Also, to change the mulcher/bag/side discharge attachments you need wrenches, which is a pain on a modern mower."

"I've purchased several products in the last year or two because they came with cash rebates. However, the rebate companies refuse to mail checks to my post office box. They have no problem notifying me by mail, but refuse to issue the checks. It's frustrating, and some companies have lost my business because of this."

**Tim Jorn, Ames, Iowa:** Tim's pleased with his 1991 Dodge W-250 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine. "I bought it used with about 193,000 miles on it and now it has more than 235,000 miles. I've replaced a water pump, alternator, and block heater. Otherwise it has required only routine maintenance. I use a 5 percent soy diesel blend in the engine and have all the power I need. Fuel efficiency averages in the high teens to lower 20s."

**Nancy Wells, Shade, Ohio:** "Our Rhino International 65 hp tractor lacks power and, when driving it in one of the higher gears, the clutch always slips. It can't be adjusted. Another problem is that whenever we drive up a steep grade it loses all hydraulics, so we have to turn around and head it down hill so it'll prime the exterior hydraulic pump. As a result, the only way to go up a hill is to back up."

**Terry Coulas, Cobden, Ontario:** Terry likes his 2002 Hesston 1340 discbine. "We do custom hay cutting and also cut our own hay, for a total of about 2,500 acres per year. With this machine we can cut any type of hay at any speed, any time. We trade every five years and only have to replace the knives. Drying time is one day quicker than for our neighbor who uses a New Idea model. This machine is a pleasure to use, and because it's a hydro-swing model it works excellent in odd-shaped fields."

He nominates his 2000 Case-IH 8312 discbine as his "worst buy". "The conditioner rolls wore out after one season and had to be replaced. No warranty coverage."

**Vernon Boettcher, Stacy, Minn.:** "The worst riding car I ever bought is my 2004 Lincoln town car. My previous 1999 Town Car rode wonderful, but on this one they changed the steering, rear shocks, and tires and it rides terrible. It rides like my 2-ton Ford truck. My advice is to take a ride before you buy."

**Arco Rosenow, Chillicothe, Ill.:** "I thought I made a mistake last year when I bought my Mantis rototiller, but it turned out to be my best buy (ph 215 355-9700; www.mantisgardentools.com). The rototiller came in a small box that weighed only about 20 lbs., and it looked like a toy compared to

## He Put Duals On 15-Passenger Van

My husband Tim retired from his job in 1993 and decided to work part time as a taxi driver for the Amish and Mennonites members of our community," says Helen Thompson, Mechanicsville, Maryland.

"A while back he bought a 15-passenger Dodge van. Soon after, a report came out about the dangers of rollover with these vans. I was very concerned about the safety of my husband and his passengers and kept asking him if there wasn't anything we could do to reduce the problem."

"After several weeks of thinking about it, he came up with the idea of putting dual wheels on the van. It turns out J.C. Whitney has a dual wheel kit for these vans which he bought and installed. J.C. Whitney was very helpful and called several times to make sure he had them installed correctly."

"I must say he gets many curious looks, laughs and questions about the van. People talk to him at stoplights and often blow the horn to get him to slow down for questions. So far, he has the only van in this area with dual wheels. He had to make his own fend-



To reduce the danger of a rollover on his 15-passenger Dodge van, Tim Thompson put duals on back of it. He also made his own fenders to fit.

ers because he couldn't find any that would fit. Tim's very proud of it and his passengers are happy to be riding in a safer vehicle.

"I'm not going to tell him I sent this to you. It'll be a great surprise for him if you put it in FARM SHOW."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tim Thompson, 40820 Old Horse Landing, Mechanicsville, MD 20659 (ph 301 884-3659).

other tillers on the market. When I started the motor, it sounded like a big bee. However, I quickly found out this machine really tears up the ground. And the drier the ground is, the better it works. It pulverizes soil to the size of corn kernels and works great to weed the garden. I've also used it to cut away and terrace a 6-ft. high by 8-ft. wide hard clay bank - a job that took about two hours. One time I even used it to cut an 8-in. deep trench for burying a cable to an outbuilding, and to cut a 36-in. deep trench for a building foundation. I was able to make the trench so straight I didn't even have to use forms below ground."

"Gibbs Oil is the best penetrating oil I've ever found (ph 800 555-3167; www.gibbsoil.us). It's expensive at about \$20 per can, but it takes very little oil to do the job. This oil contains no silicone, water, kerosene, acids or cheap fillers. It can be used to spray into door locks to prevent freeze-ups, to wipe a door jam to keep doors from freezing shut, and to eliminate corrosion on battery terminals. It takes about 20 minutes of soak time for a badly rusted bolt and nut, or about two days to free a stuck engine."

**Catherine Dibenedetto, Oscar, La.:** "Our 2004 Maytag dishwasher is our worst buy. The water failed to drain out of it and then leaked out and ruined our pine floors. The company replaced the pump but then the hose broke. They replaced the hose, but now the door won't close properly."

**R.W. Ellis, Sr., Seymour, Ind.:** "One of my best buys ever is an Excalibur food dehydrator (www.excaliburdehydrator.com or ph 800 875-4254). I can dry just about anything with it - all kinds of fruits and vegetables. One good treat is tomatoes sliced 1/



8 thick, which I eat like potato chips after they're dried. I slice the tomatoes with a slicer that I bought at a hardware store. My most popular treat, though, is a dried banana with a pecan on top. People just love them. I slice

the bananas with a plastic curved cutter that I found at a yard sale. I give these out as treats wherever I go. I'm the favorite customer at the bank."

**John E. Cissell, Bardstow, Ky.:** "I bought my best buy Echo weed eater more than 15 years ago. It always starts on the second or third pull. I've changed the spark plug only twice. I use this weed eater not only at home but also to keep all the fence rows clean on a farm that I own. It's a great tool."

On the "worst buy" side, "My 1995 Sears Craftsman chain saw is the worst chain saw on the market. I have to pull the starter rope at least 20 times before it'll start. Three different repair shops have tried to fix it with no luck. The only good thing is that my elbows stay in good shape from all the cranking I have to do. I'm glad I don't have to use this saw very much."

**Richard Hart, Antioch, Ill.:** "My 1994 Dodge Ram 2500 pickup pulls everything I hitch it to. It's also fuel efficient."

On the negative side, "My Mantis rototiller starts hard and the tines clog up too easily. However, this rototiller does have guts for its size."

**Andrew R. Holko, Bristolville, Ohio:** "I use my 2003 New Holland TC-33 tractor on my tree farm, along with five other tractors. It's reliable, well balanced, and well engineered. The problem is that on rough ground the plastic parts break, such as light assemblies, grill parts, instrument panels, etc. My dealer has been helpful. However, I question the design and testing of these Boomer series tractors."

**John K. Reed, Charleston, Ill.:** "I've had good luck with my Grasshopper zero turn riding mower equipped with a 28 hp diesel Kubota engine and a 61-in. power fold, front mount deck. Last fall I had the pleasure of touring the company's factory in Moundridge, Kansas. When I got home I decided I had to have one of their mowers so I bought a 2005 928D model and am well pleased with it. My grass can't grow fast enough."

**Anthony Broghammer, Manchester, Iowa:** Anthony's happy with his 2005 Chevrolet Silverado LT 1/2-ton extended cab 2-WD pickup. "It has a soft ride 'button' that makes it ride like a big car, and it has a great sound system with On-Star and Satellite Radio."

**Michael Shull, Leitchfield, Ky.:** "It has  
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