

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

By: Mark Newhall
Editor

Bill Gergen
Senior Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use
the survey form on our website at
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Marie Blocher, Mesquite, Texas: “After reading a story in FARM SHOW, I purchased a **StepStart** foot pedal starter kit for rope-start lawn mowers and installed it on my mower. (Step Start Corp., Monroeville, Ala., ph 334 356-4860; www.stepstart.com). It fits most walk-behind mowers without a rear bagger. Once attached to the mower, you start it by stepping on a pedal. The attachment requires no tools to install and no modifications to the mower or engine. It attaches to the mower handle with four adjustable clamps. The pull cord is fed through a series of pulleys which provide the leverage to easily pull the cord.

“Not many products these days come with everything needed for installation, but this one does - right down to the tie-wrap to hold the spark plug wire,” says Marie. “Such attention to detail is really appreciated by customers because it’s so rare.

“I’m sure there are other seniors, like me, who can still mow their grass if we can just get the mower started. With StepStart, I no longer have to rely on friends or neighbors to start the mower for me. Like most seniors, I want to keep doing as much as I can for myself as long as I can. I feel the exercise I

get pushing my mower is essential to my good health.”

David Hogan, Roopville, Ga.: David’s impressed with his 1989 **Ford Ranger** 4-WD pickup equipped with a 2.3-liter, 4-cyl. engine. “I bought it new and have already put more than 265,000 miles on it, yet it still has the original starter, alternator and water pump. Only the clutch and air conditioner have been replaced.”

Joe Stucky, Pretty Prairie, Kansas: “During the last 50 years of farming I’ve owned two tractors that have stood out above the rest: A 1950 **Minneapolis Moline** standard UTS and a 1985 **International Harvester** 1066, which I still have. Both tractors were sturdy, well-engineered and simple in design compared to today’s complex tractors, which are far more expensive to keep in the field.”

Larry Flesher, Ridgeville, Ind.: “My **Sunflower** 25-ft. field cultivator is my best buy. It has a solid frame with three pin hinges on the wings, so it stays in the ground and stays level. My dad has used one for about five years and it has proven itself. I was so impressed I just bought a new one for myself.

“My 1997 **Dodge** 250 4-WD pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine and automatic transmission is my worst buy. I bought it used with only about 34,000 miles. It looked nice on the lot and it drives and handles well, but that’s about it. During the first 2,000 miles we owned it the transmission went out, as well as the coil, starter, generator, front axle joints, and computer. In cooler weather I have to restart it about three times before it’ll keep running.”

Mike Shilling, Charlotte, Mich.: “My 2000 **Lincoln** 125 MIG wire welder is my best buy. It makes strong, clean welds that look just perfect.

“My 2002 **Chevrolet** 1-ton Silverado 3500 pickup is my worst buy. Both the left and right rear fenders had to be replaced during the first year with less than 15,000 miles on the pickup. The fenders are made from soybean-based plastic which tends to rot. Once they crack they can’t be repaired. A body shop replaced them at a cost of \$4,400. Then a noise developed in the heater motor, and a maple leaf was found in the fan cage. It cost \$5,500 to remove sheet metal from the floor of the pickup bed. The sheet metal was full of dings and dents. They might as well have used tin soup cans.”

Harold Bevell, Blytheville, Ark.: “My best buy is my **HTP Mig 240 welder** (HTP America, Inc., Arlington Heights, Ill. ph 800 872-9353). We’ve used it to build toolbars and also to repair and weld derby cars. It always performs flawlessly.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his **C/P turbo 1/2-in. impact air wrench**. “The company rates it at 800 lbs. torque, but I don’t think it’s half that. We quit using it and bought a **Harbor Freight Earthquake 1/2-in. impact wrench**. It has more power and cost only about one-third as much.”

Joseph DeRuiter, Vesper, Wis.: “Our best buy ever was a **Farmall B tractor**. My dad bought it used when I was 14 or 15 years old. I’m 54 now, so the tractor has to be 60 to 70 years old now. I use it for getting firewood and for raking hay and doing other chores. If the battery ever goes dead I just pull the choke, set the throttle, and flip the switch on. Then I take the hand crank to the front of the tractor and crank it two, three or four times at most and it will start right up. It doesn’t matter if it’s a hot summer day or 20° below zero.”

Morgan Reeder, Brigham City, Utah: “My 2001 **Chevrolet Silverado** pickup equipped with a Duramax diesel engine and Allison automatic transmission is my best buy. It has a lot of power and is fuel efficient, making it an ideal pickup for towing trailers. The grade-braking feature is impressive, and the transmission adjusts itself to the way you drive. Also, it rides smooth without any rattles or vibrations.”

Floyd V. Israelsen, Logan, Utah: Floyd’s satisfied with his **Kubota M8200 4-WD tractor** equipped with a front-end loader. “I bought it used but haven’t had any problems with it. It always starts in cold weather and is a dependable and economical tractor.”

Lowell Patterson, Eighty-Four, Penn.: Lowell’s “worst buy” is his **Milwaukee 1/2-in. hammer drill** equipped with a German-made Rohti chuck. “Even with only average use the Rohti chuck will fail. Sears, DeWalt, Bosch and others have all used this same chuck. It won’t hold tight on bits and will rapidly deteriorate in performance until it fails totally. I’ve used this chuck on several different brands of hammer drills. I wrote to several of the manufacturers but got no response.

“While working in a feed mill a few years ago, I had occasion to use a **Black & Decker** no. 8 nibbler to cut 12-ga. (almost 1/8-in. thick) stainless steel sheeting. Stainless steel is just about the toughest metal to cut. The tool would break after one 4 by 8-ft. sheet. I knew I had to do something to keep the owner of the mill from quitting the project. So I decided to use copper bearing anti-seize compound on the bottom side of the sheet, where I would be cutting. I used heavy gear oil to cover the cut-mark on top, so I could still see the pencil mark. With this simple change I was able to extend the life of the tool greatly. At \$85 a set this was an exceptional improvement.”

Harley T. Green, Ilgen, Minn.: “My 1992 **Ford Ranger** pickup, which I bought used, is fuel efficient and requires very little maintenance. It always starts and is easy to ser-