

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

ATV is our worst buy. It stopped shifting after we had only put 140 miles on it. The dealer said someone at the factory had cross-threaded or stripped a bolt on the transmission. The company said they would replace the transmission case and provide parts, but they wanted \$450 for labor. Fortunately, our dealer solved the problem by installing Helicoil inserts for new bolts. However, I still had to pay \$30 for the gaskets. The dealer was great, but the company and warranty were not."

Kirk Dahl, Ruby Valley, Nevada: "We installed a 5.9-liter Cummins diesel engine in our 1992 Ford F-250 4-WD Supercab pickup and it really worked out great. This repower job was such a success that we put the same engine in a 1988 Ford F-250 4-WD pickup. Both vehicles have performed great since the conversions, both in fuel economy and power."

Aaron Barneson, Chippewa Falls, Wis.: "My Stihl 360 Pro chain saw is lightweight, works fast and smooth, and is powerful. It lets me cut two to three times as much wood in the same amount of time as I could with any other brand."

"My 2002 Sears Craftsman 42 cc string trimmer is my worst buy. It wouldn't even run when I got it home. I exchanged it for another model, but that model wouldn't stay running either except at full throttle - it randomly stalled out. I took it to the service department seven different times during the first year - and then the warranty expired. Finally I got rid of it and bought a Stihl FS 200, which has been trouble-free."

R. Himmerich Y Valencia, Pena Blanca, N. Mex.: "My 2002 Dodge 3500 1-ton pickup is my best buy. I bought it to replace a 1989 Dodge W-350 model. Both pickups have manual transmissions. The 1989 model had 480,000 miles on it when my son bought it. The 2002 model already has more than 54,000 miles on it with no problems. The 1989 model averages more than 20 mpg; the 2002 model, 18 1/2 mpg. The 2002 model really should have locking hubs, though."

Joe Price, Somerset, Ky.: Joe's the satisfied owner of a Stihl chain saw equipped with a telescoping extension. "The extension really comes in handy for trimming branches off trees. I can stand on the ground and reach up a long ways without having to climb up in the tree, which I appreciate as I'm 65 years old. My wife and I are really pleased with this chain saw."

Clark E. Martin, Harrisonburg, Va.: "Our 1995 Deere 6500 L tractor has a lot of power, good hydraulics, and adequate traction. Best of all, the engine has amazing torque and power. It's the most fuel efficient tractor we own. My only complaint is that the operator station could be improved in design and layout."

James F. Friesen, Lake Charles, La.: James likes his 1971 Long 3-pt. backhoe. "This machine can't match the power or capabilities of an industrial model backhoe. But for general, light duty work it's great. Over the years it has required some repairs, of course, but nothing out of the ordinary. It works great for rice field work, burying dead animals, conservation practices, and for many miscellaneous jobs."

Cullen Loveless, Booneville, Miss.: A 1969 Chevrolet 1/2-ton pickup equipped with a 6-cyl. engine and manual transmission rates as Cullen's "best buy." "I bought it used in 1971. It has performed beautifully with hardly any breakdowns and is still going strong. I use it to haul seed, fertilizer, firewood, etc. It's a cheap form of transportation in these days of high gas prices."

"My 1952 Ford 8N tractor is still going strong. I use it almost every day, especially

for gardening work."

Wayne Lissman, Burns, Oregon: Wayne's happy with his 2004 Dodge Intrepid car. "It gets 29 or 30 mpg, rides good, and handles well. It has required only routine maintenance."

Butch Engel, Littlerock, Calif.: "My Kubota 3710 HST 4-WD tractor has a lot of power and a good view over the hood. It has a spring-loaded seat which provides a great ride over rough terrain. Maintenance costs have been low."

Dave Ibach, Reading, Penn.: "My 2002 Logosol M7 portable sawmill is my best buy. It was shipped to me in three boxes and was



easy to assemble. It's equipped with a Stihl 066 chain saw and a ripping chain that turns 8-ft. long, 19-in. dia. logs into perfect lumber. The mill weighs just 110 lbs. so one man can load it into the bed of a pickup."

Mont Blackburn, Thermopolis, Wyo.: "We're happy with our 2004 GMLS Golden Fox steel building. We were on our way to pick up the building in Peabody, Kansas, when our pickup quit working 20 miles from town. The company's head man came out and personally diagnosed the problem with the pickup. He drove to Wichita, bought the part and then - most amazingly - installed it for us right there on the side of the road. How's that for customer service? My wife and I, who are 75 and 72 years old, were able to put the building up ourselves without any help. This is our second Golden Fox building and we wouldn't buy anything else."

"Our 1999 Ford F-250 pickup equipped with a Powerstroke diesel engine is our worst buy. The camshaft position sensor went out and left us sitting in the middle of a highway construction zone. We'd been warned that this problem had happened to several other people. What's really bad is that you don't get any warning there's a problem at all."

Allen Fournier, Hampden, Maine: "My best buy was my 1984 Wheel Horse C-175 tractor. It still runs great, but it was semi-retired last year by a Kubota B7500 tractor. The Kubota runs fantastic. No problems."

Martin J. Engelbrecht, Jefferson City, Mo.: "It's big enough for 90 percent of the needs on my small farm," says Martin about his 1999 Massey Ferguson 261 tractor equipped with a Bush Hog QT front-end loader. "It has the best fuel economy I've ever seen in a late model tractor. The loader frame has never been off the tractor. My only complaint is that the remote hydraulics work too slow. Also, gear shifting is slow and clumsy, especially when you try to shift the pto on or off. I put used airplane tires on front. The original tubeless front tires punctured too easily. Airplane tires don't steer as well with a loader tractor, but they don't go flat all the time, either."

Robert E. Whitehead, Kiowa, Colo.: "Our 2003 Deere X495 garden tractor equipped with a 3-cyl. Yanmar diesel engine and 54-in. mower deck is our best buy. It does an excellent job mowing, has a lot of power, and a comfortable ride. I use the mower on two acres around our home and farm buildings. Deere equipment is more expensive, but I think it's worth the additional cost."

Kencel W. Matheny, Rt. 1, Box 475, Clarksburg, W. Va. 26301: "I nominate my Landini Globus 65 tractor as my worst buy. Buyer beware of the lug bolts on the front

wheels. I've had problems with them breaking and can't get anyone to help. The small lugs on the front wheels make this tractor very unsafe to operate. Because of this dangerous condition I don't recommend this tractor to anyone. I'd appreciate hearing from anyone else who's had similar problems with Landini tractors. I can be reached at breezyknollfarm@juno.com."

Reverend Barry Andrews, Williston, Fla.: Reverend Barry is impressed with his 2002 Sears zero turning riding mower. "Although it has broken down twice, the company repaired it to my satisfaction. It does a great job of cutting our tough Florida grass, reducing the time spent on my 1-acre parsonage yard by about one third. I bought it used as a returned model for less than half its retail price."

Mick Corse, St. Louis, Mo.: "My 2002 Volkswagen Golf TDI equipped with a diesel engine and 5-speed transmission is a best buy. No problems. It gets 50 mpg. I installed grease fittings on the rear wheels just so that I could grease the wheel bearings. I don't like the front end because I can't grease it at all."

Harold Hershey, Harrisonville, Penn.: Harold nominates his 1991 Ford 2120 4-WD tractor as his "worst buy." "At first I thought I had made a good buy because this tractor performed so much better than my previous Case 885 2-WD loader tractor. With that tractor I was always getting stuck while cleaning out ditches and trying to back out with a loaded bucket, whereas the Ford could handle that kind of work well. But the Ford wasn't as good as the Case when it came to plowing. The Case could pull a 3-bottom plow with no problems. I only put a 2-bottom plow on the Ford, but if I didn't have the tractor in 4-WD the wheels would just spin."

"In September of 1992, with just 340 hours

on it, the Ford started having problems. The bell housing broke into five pieces. However, the tractor was still under warranty so the company paid for it. The tractor had been sagging down in the middle and, in my opinion, it had to have put pressure on some gears in the transmission. The dealer got paid only for the time the company figured it should take to change a bell housing. So they didn't want to take the time to see if there was any other damage inside the transmission."

"Then in 1999, with 1,325 hours on the tractor, I heard a noise in the transmission gears. The dealer took the transmission apart and found a gear that was all chipped up. No gears were completely broken, but they ended up changing three gears, the gear slide, and a center shaft. With parts and labor the total repair bill was \$1,521.95. They told me it looked as if the transmission had been low on oil at some time or other. But I know that wasn't true."

"In 2000, with 1,462 hours on the tractor, the front wheel drive locked up due to a piece of metal between two cogs in the gearbox located in front of the transmission."

"At 1,490 hours the transmission started making a terrible growling noise whenever I put it in reverse. The dealer took the tractor apart and changed a bearing. Then they decided to change all the bearings in the transmission just to play it safe. But that still didn't solve the problem."

"I'm tired of being a guinea pig and paying for all these repairs. I was told I would have to pay to have anyone come to my place and even listen to the noise. Now I can sometimes hear the noise with the transmission in a forward gear. I can also hear the noise by putting the clutch in and out without the transmission in gear."

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