

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

eat my breakfasts on the run and the idea of instant scrambled eggs sounded great. The containers are shaped like hand grenades and are placed in the microwave for only a minute. On my first attempt, the product exploded all over the inside of my microwave. I spent 30 minutes cleaning the microwave and re-read the instructions, then tried again with the same results. This would be a great gift for that hated relative that everyone has in their family."

**David K. Curtis, Sedalia, Colo.:** David nominates his 2000 **Ford F-250 4-WD** pickup as his "best buy." "It leaks absolutely no lubricants of any kind and doesn't even collect dust on any seals or gaskets. It has a lot of power and excellent brakes, heater, air conditioning, doors, tailgate, etc. I can't find anything that needs to be improved on. It no problems.

"My 2002 **Chevrolet Duramax 3500** pickup equipped with an Allison transmission is my worst buy. The doors on it sagged and can't be adjusted. The front pump on the transmission leaks. It doesn't have enough power, though the fuel economy is okay. I wouldn't want my worst enemy to buy one."

**Tom Clobb, Manson, Manitoba:** "My 1976 **Deutz D130-06** tractor, which I bought used in 1989, is my best buy. I've had virtually no problems with it. The engine has 7,900 hours."

**T. Smith, Portland, Oregon:** He likes his **Rat Zapper** trap (Professional Pest Control Products, Pensacola, Fla. 32526 ph 800 434-4555; www.pestproducts.com). It operates on four AA alkaline batteries. To set it, you place a small amount of dry pet food at the rear of the trap. When you turn on the unit, the red



light will first blink and then stay on letting you know the trap is set and ready for action. Place the trap on a flat surface against a wall. Once the rodent enters the Rat Zapper, the trap senses the presence of the animal and gives it a lethal electric jolt. The trap's red light will now blink, letting you know you have a dead rodent in the trap. You can empty the trap by turning it upside down, allowing the dead rat or mouse to slide out.

"I was skeptical of this product when I bought it, but it worked so amazingly well that I bought another one for our barn. It's quick, effective and humane. It gives rats a 'shocking' dining experience," he says.

"My 2002 **Land Rover Discovery SUV** is my worst buy. My wife liked these vehicles so we purchased one. In my opinion they're extremely overrated and lack some very basic functions found in other vehicles. The engine is underpowered and just slugs along. The real problem, though, is customer service at the dealer level. They overpromise and underdeliver, and they're rude. Next time I'll buy a Ford."

**David Luehring, Terril, Iowa:** "My 1982 **Deere 4640** tractor is my best buy. It has a great cab and more power than my Deere 4320."

**Randy Campbell, Selma, Ala.:** Randy nominates his 2002 **Ford F-250 Super Duty 4-WD** extended cab pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter Power Stroke diesel engine as his "best buy." "I've used it a lot to pull a 36-ft. tandem axle, 20,000-lb. rated gooseneck trailer on which I haul a Ford 555 backhoe.

This pickup has tremendous torque, handles well, and is a pleasure to drive. Without pulling a trailer it gets 20 mpg on the highway."

**Dennis Stick, Jones, Mich.:** "I like my 1986 **Deere 950 4-WD** tractor equipped with a front-end loader. Our neighbors all had big tractors and at first they laughed at my little 31 hp tractor. However, over the last 20 years I've used it several times to pull their tractors out of swamps and I've dragged a lot of stuck trucks and trailers out to the road. I have had clutch problems with it and am now on my third clutch."

**Donald R. Jones, Sr., Charleston, W. Va.:** "My **Toyota Tacoma 4-WD** pickup and **Toyota Echo** car are both best buys. They're trouble-free and have never been back to the dealer. They're also fuel efficient. The Tacoma has the best gearing of any pickup I've ever owned."

**Clint Smith, Sr., Junction, Texas:** "Clint's the satisfied owner of a 2003 **Echo** extendable chain saw. "With this extendable saw I can trim trees from the ground as high as I could if I stood in a Caterpillar loader bucket - and it's much safer this way."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2002 **Sears Craftsman** cordless drill. "I hadn't used it much when the battery charger quit working. Unfortunately, the company wouldn't honor the warranty. I bought another charger for about \$65 but it, too, quit working within a month. The company refused to either replace or repair it."

**Roger Wilkinson, Oakbank, Manitoba:** "It's a simple, reliable tractor that's also easy to maintain," says Roger about his 1993 **Ford Versatile 876**.

**Jim Achen, Albuquerque, New Mexico:** "My 2000 **Ford Power Stroke** diesel crew cab 4-WD pickup has performed flawlessly with only normal maintenance. When you pull a tractor you can't even feel it back there. I've driven it twice to the Atlantic Coast and once to the Pacific. It's my best buy."

**Douglas J. Hart, Bethel, Vt.:** "I like my 1970 **Long DT 445 4-WD** tractor. It's easy to work on and has a positive traction rear end which provides great traction."

**Henry Kustos, New Milford, Conn.:** A 1996 **Mercedes 300 D** car equipped with a diesel engine rates as Henry's "worst buy." "I had a lot of trouble starting this car. I took it to the dealer twice - once for four weeks and again for five weeks. When I went to pick up the car, they had washed it and I couldn't start it. Finally, out of desperation, I bought another car off the lot. I noticed that there were five or six Mercedes cars there with the same problem, and they were all diesel models."

**Ivan Sewell, Pembroke, New Brunswick:** "I operate but don't own a 2002 **Kubota M110** tractor equipped with an **Alo Quicke** front-end loader. This tractor handles well. However, I don't like the powershift transmission on it because it doesn't always engage when I push the button in. This tractor is built too light for the power it has. Also, the drive train is built too light. The loader is also built way too light which caused the arms to bend."

**Ed Cernusak, Ash Fork, Arizona:** "I like my 2003 **GM Sierra** pickup. It's equipped with all the bells and whistles and has superb fuel efficiency."

**Marshall Orcutt, Siloam Springs, Ark.:** "My 2002 **Kubota M 9000** tractor does everything I ask it to. It handles my cutter-baler nicely and uses about two gallons of fuel per hour. I paid \$24,000 for it which I think was a good buy."

**Jeffrey T. Brown, Mandeville, La.:** "I like my 2003 **Mahindra 3510 4-WD** tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 6-ft. bucket. I've always tried to buy American-

made products but the price difference on this package deal was so sweet that I couldn't turn it down. This tractor has been stuck once, buried below the axle. That's because it's fitted with short, wide industrial tires that don't work well in mud. However, the wide tires don't make deep ruts in my lawn while I'm mowing, which I like."

**Ted Shambaugh, Oakley, Ill.:** "Although I like electronic assistance for row guidance, mapping soil profiles with yields, chemicals applications, record keeping or what have you, I haven't found a single company that can do it all. And often the electronics from one company don't interface with those of another's."

"It can get expensive. I can pay out \$2,000 for a receiver then learn I need to put up the same amount for an additional receiver. Then the cables won't plug into another receiver and need adapters."

"Last spring, it took about three weeks and a lot of phone calls to get it all together. And, we still can't do all that I'd like such as integrating with our record keeping."

"Another problem developed when my accounting package supplier, Farmworks, collaborated with another supplier, Ravens, to develop a guidance system called Guidemate."

"I already owned a Trimble receiver with a lightbar and an Agco receiver without a light bar so I thought I could equip the Agco with the new guidance system. This would allow me to use the Farmworks package to integrate with my accounting system."

"Yet, when I tried connecting the various components, they didn't work even though I gave the vendor the specifications."

"What we need basically - and maybe we are slowly coming to it - is a center where information is shared by manufacturers so

they can integrate their systems."

**Don Lindsey, Turlock, Calif.:** "A while back, in your Best/Worst Buys, someone said how much they liked "Torx" screws. I wondered at the time how the guy managed to get his pants on in the morning. The "Torx" screw must have been invented by a politician or a bureaucrat because it has to be among the stupidest ideas of the 20th Century."

"The efficiency of any moment of rotation is proportional to the distance from the center of the item being rotated to the means of applying the necessary rotational pressure, so that the best efficiency on a screw, for instance, is a thumb screw or wing screw followed by a square head followed by a hex head followed by a slotted head followed by the recessed heads like the Phillips, Allen, and the Square Drive. The Torx head is the least efficient because the recess is the smallest relative to the size of the screw, added to the problem of the many contacts with the driver."

"I just finished drilling out six screws that refused to come out. They were Torx head screws and I used up my entire vocabulary of cuss words. It is quite difficult drilling out small diameter screws without mucking up the threads of the holes."

**Glenn R. Damman, Melbourne, Iowa:** Glenn's the satisfied owner of a 2001 **White LT 2150 Hydro-lawn** tractor equipped with a 46-in. mower deck. "It has more than 220 hours on it with no problems. My only expense has been for oil and filters."

**Ronnie Muse, Rose Hill, Va.:** "My 1979 **New Holland 4630** tractor is highly maneuverable and just the right size for everything I do."

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