

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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Gary Parker, Ft. Shaw, Montana: Gary's the proud owner of a 2002 **International** 4300 dually truck equipped with a DT 466 engine, 7-speed transmission, Jake brakes, and air seats. "I use it to pull a 24-ft. aluminum trailer and put on about 20,000 miles every year delivering cattle. This truck has a lot of power and an excellent split on gears, and the Jake saves on brakes. With a full load and hauling big cattle, the duals on the rear axle are all overloaded yet the Jake brakes can handle it. Pickup brakes don't compare. This truck keeps me road legal and is great to drive."

Larry Hershberger, Kalona, Iowa: "I like my **Deere** 5300 MFWD tractor equipped with a 540 front-end loader. I bought it used a year ago, and several weeks later the PTO clutch gave out. However, the dealer replaced it at no cost. This tractor is small enough to get in and around buildings, yet it's strong enough to handle round bales and grind feed. And, with front wheel assist, it works great in mud and snow."

Aaron Warner, LaMonte, Mo.: "We're well satisfied with our 1995 **Melroe** Spray Coupe which we bought used two years ago. The controls and monitor are user friendly and within easy reach. Everything on this machine can be easily serviced. It has worked flawlessly and we're well satisfied with it."

Douglas Ripka, Rebersburg, Penn.: A 2004 **Struck** mini dozer heads his "best buy" list (www.struckcorp.com; ph 262.377-3300). It's a compact tracked machine for digging,



dozing, hauling, and earthmoving that's available in five models ranging from 10 to 28 hp. The 10 hp model is small enough to fit in the back of a pickup. More than 30 different attachments are available including a loader, front and rear hitch, six-way blade, backhoe, auxiliary hydraulic circuit, PTO-operated auger, scarifier/ripper, log splitter, log fork, post-hole auger, plow, etc.

"I bought it last March and there were a few problems at first which the factory promptly worked out. This little workhorse has helped me move a lot of dirt and manure. The transmission system consists of Kevlar cord belts, with a sprocket and chain final drive, which is very simple to work on."

Cathy Stapleton, Atascadero, Calif.: Cathy likes her **DR** trimmer-mower. "It works like a weed whacker on wheels and is able to power through 3-ft high wet weeds and 1-in. dia. brush with ease. It starts right up every time and has low maintenance requirements. It's worth every penny I paid for it."

Kurt Freitag, Ashvelot, N.H.: Kurt's pleased with his 2002 **Lincoln** Power-Luber. "It requires only one hand to operate and comes with a 36-in. long hose to reach hard-to-get-at fittings. The battery lasts a long time between charges."

Fred E. Foster, Brandywine, Md.: "My 2001 **Deere** 4100 compact tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower has been used all over southern Maryland for landscaping and plowing snow. It'll lift anything imaginable with no problems at all. All I have to do is grease it, fill it with fuel, and go.

"My 2003 **Dodge** Ram 3500 4-WD crew

cab pickup equipped with a 24-valve Cummins diesel engine is also a best buy. It has a lot of power and is fuel efficient."

Larry Cremeans, Branchland, W. Va.: Larry nominates his **Homelite** long shaft weed eater as his "best buy." "I had heard a lot about Homelite products, so I had to find out for myself. This weed eater is well built and easy to maintain. I love it."

Perry Mcinnish, Cragford, Ala.: "My **Kubota** 3110 tractor is my best buy. I've tortured it, tested it, and even turned it over, but it just keeps on going."

Max Wernsing, Jewett, Texas: "I like my **Deere** 4300 tractor equipped with a backhoe attachment. It works perfect for digging out stumps and brush and for digging water lines."

Greg Dennis, Ranburne, Ala.: "My 2002 **Echo** line trimmer is my best buy. I'm well into my third growing season of using and abusing this jewel of a trimmer. I use it to trim grass around our house, cut weeds around our chicken houses, and for cutting weeds and light brush along fence lines and road frontages. I haven't spent a dime on it other than routine maintenance."

"**Goodyear** Wrangler radial tires are my worst buys. I bought these tires for my GM pickup and had nothing but problems with them from the start, including tread separations, sidewall failure, and punctures by objects that couldn't be found in the tire. I went through nine different tires on the pickup over a 20,000-mile period. Finally I decided to replace them with another brand."

Wayne Campbell, Brookville, Penn.: "We bought our **International** Harvester 16 cu. ft. freezer in 1955 and still use it. The paint is bad but we haven't had any trouble with it. It has always worked. They don't make 'em like this any more."

Don Grantham, Dearing, Ga.: "My best buy in 70 years is **FARM SHOW** magazine. It's very interesting to see what ideas other people have come up with. I pass the magazine all over our neighborhood, so a lot of people in our area see it."

Jason Onago, Milan, Mich.: A twine tensioner for round balers that he bought from



Don Parker, Scottville, Mich., rates as Jason's "best buy" (Vol. 28, No. 2). Powered by the tractor battery, the unit bolts onto the baler between the twine box and twine applicator tubes and is connected to a remote switch in the cab. Flipping the switch for one or two seconds actuates a solenoid that causes the brake to lift off the twine, thus freeing the twine for an easy start.

One reason he wanted tighter bales was so he could bale straw left by his Case IH rotary combine.

"It lets me get the twine tight enough so bales don't break. One time I accidentally dropped a tightly wrapped big bale 12 ft. and I was surprised to see it bounce. Without the tensioner, the bale would have exploded. But with the twine so tight it bounced like a small square bale might bounce."

While Onago adjusted his Parker tensioner to work with the baler manufacturer's original tensioner, you can also back off completely from the manufacturer's tensioner and

use Parker's unit in place of it. Fits most balers (Donald Parker, Scottville, Mich. ph 231 757-2804).

Bradley Stroll, Ozone Park, N.Y.: Bradley likes the pair of support stands he bought from Gray Professional Service Equipment (St. Joseph, Mo., www.grayusa.com/support_stand.asp or 800 821-7320). The stands have an adjustment range of 12 to 20 in. A pair of stands can support up to 30,870 lbs.

"I farm and also have a wholesale bakery company so I have a lot of trucks, and I do most of my own service work on them. I bought the stands last summer after the ones I was using wore out. Shopping around, I quickly discovered that it's hard to find support stands not made in China and, in my opinion, most of them are junk. It doesn't pay to take chances when you're working underneath a vehicle."

"These stands are well made and lock in place with metal pins. I use a jack to lift the vehicle and then place the two support stands underneath, one on each side. When I remove the jack from the vehicle, I know that it won't budge. The stands sell for \$225 plus S&H."

Ed Young, Defiance, Ohio: "My **Stihl** 017 chain saw equipped with a 14-in. bar is dependable and comes with a safety chain bar lock that's really handy. No problems. I used my old Stihl saw for more than 20 years until parts for it were no longer available."

Russell Rowton, Edmond, Okla.: "I have more than 236,000 miles on my 1992 **Chevrolet** Suburban and it still runs as good as the day I bought it. It just goes and goes and goes."

Rick Boyd, Lexington, Ohio: "I like my 2001 **Sears Craftsman** 14.4-volt drill/driver kit. It's equipped with a light, charger, and two batteries. I've used it to remodel many rooms and projects, and it always works flawlessly. It has performed beyond my expectations."

"My **Mantis** tiller with dethatcher and sidewalk trimmer edger is also a best buy. I bought it used in 1991. This little tiller does a fantastic job in small gardens and flower beds and works great for cultivating. My neighbors use it and they keep wanting to buy it from me. However, it will never be for sale but will be handed down to our kids."

"My 2003 **Sears Craftsman** line trimmer powered by a 32 cc gas engine is my worst buy. It's hard to start and vibrates bad. I wish I would have spent extra money and bought an **Echo** or a **Stihl**."

H.M. Black, Sudan, Texas: A 2002 **Kawasaki** 2-WD 4-wheeler rates as his "best buy." "It starts well in both cold and hot weather. I like the excellent gear ratios because it works well for slow travel on rough ground to check fences and to deliver cotton seed to our cows. It also works good for checking crops and is fast enough for road travel. It loads and hauls easily in the back of a pickup."

Paul Lammers, Kalamazoo, Mich.: Paul's disappointed with his 1998 **Chevrolet** Venture. "I bought it used with 60,000 miles on it. It wasn't long before I discovered that third gear was gone. The transmission shop said the other gears looked brand new, but for some reason third gear was gone."

"About a year later I discovered an antifreeze leak. The problem turned out to be the intake gasket. It seems that GM makes the engine block out of iron and the heads out of aluminum. The gasket in between is made of plastic. Because the different metals expand and contract at different temperatures, the gasket in between can't handle the changes. I talked to an independent mechanic who said he has seen the intake gaskets fail at only 20,000 miles."

"Finally, this spring we discovered the air conditioning didn't work. It's probably the evaporator, which is an \$800 job. I now have 92,000 miles on this vehicle and can't wait to get rid of it."

James Baugus, Kemp, Texas: James is pleased with his 2002 **GM** Sierra longbed pickup equipped with a 4.8-liter engine and automatic 4-speed transmission with overdrive. "It's the right size pickup for what I need. The engine has a lot of power for a small V-8 and gets up to 24 mpg on the highway going with the wind, and 17 mpg loaded with the air conditioning on and going against the wind. On average it gets 21 mpg."

Zachary White, Alamogordo, New Mexico: "My 1997 **White** 6510 tractor has a lot of power but I wish it had a better seat with more adjustments. It handles better than

"It handles better than any tractor I've ever driven."

any other tractor I've ever driven although it could be more fuel efficient. With all the improvements in vehicles and weight reduction that comes with using plastic and aluminum, why hasn't the fuel efficiency improved very much?"

Gerald A. Borders, Sullivan, Ind.: "My best buy is **Clear Out**, which is a generic Roundup product. As far as I can tell it works just as good as Roundup, but costs only \$4 per acre. Monsanto gets plenty of my money for tech fees, so I don't want to give them any more than I have to."

"My 2 1/2-year-old daughter is a best buy. She only cost \$2,250 and I'm looking forward to a lifetime of enjoyment out of her. So far she's top of the line!"

Harry Williams, Warrenton, N.C.: "I like my 1985 **Deere** 750 2-WD tractor. It's made by Yanmar. This tractor has a lot of power, a strong lift, and handles good. It's also easy to trailer. I use it with a 72-in. grooming mower, 4-ft. Bush Hog, 4-ft. box blade, angle blade, scoop, post hole digger, and 3-pt. sprayer to control weeds along fence lines. Fuel economy is excellent."

John Sparling, St. Marys, Ontario: John nominates his 1995 **Deere** 6400 tractor as his "best buy." "Visibility is good all the way around, controls are conveniently located, and the swivel seat is comfortable. They should make the hood easier to open and also make it easier to access the batteries and air filter. I also wish there were more outlets available for accessories."

Paul Bender, Strasbourg, Sask.: "My 1980 **White** 2-155 is a good tractor. It has a lot of power and is easy on fuel."

Armand D. Gravel, Kingman, Maine: A pair of **Dodge** Ram 150 pickups rate as Armand's "best buys." "We put 202,700 miles on our 1994 model without any repairs to the engine, and we have 129,600 miles on the 1998 model. We just sold the 1994 model and hope to keep the 1998 model as long as we can. Both pickups are powered by V-6 engines that are small but very reliable."

Martin MacLeod, Cardigan, P.E.I., Canada: "We like our 2001 **New Holland** 640 Silage Special round baler."

"We recently purchased a 2003 **Zetor** 7745 4-WD loader tractor and have more than 1,400 hours on it. It seems like a good tractor. All the controls on it are mechanical."

Guy Norton, Dome Creek, B.C.: "My 2000 **GM** Sierra 3/4-ton 4-WD supercab longbed pickup became a worst buy when cracks developed in the box corners just behind the cab. These cracks developed at about