

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

16,000 miles and eventually cost me \$1,600 to have repaired. GM takes no responsibility, blaming poor road conditions, which I think is ridiculous. We've lived and farmed in this same location for 30 years and never had this problem with my last four GM pickups. The problem seems to be common, so I recommend other 1999 to 2003 owners check closely with a mirror - your headache rack/canopy may be the only thing holding your box together."

Phil Carter, New Era, Mich.: Phil rates his 1999 **Massey Ferguson** 4253 tractor as "best buy." "I use it to pull a 500-gal. FMC 350 orchard sprayer, 7-shank mounted chisel plow, a corn planter, and to plow snow. It's fuel efficient and uses only 2 1/2 to 3 gal. per hour. It doesn't smoke, uses very little oil, and starts right up even in the coldest weather. The cab is easy to enter, the controls are convenient, and the seat is comfortable. Compared to my old Massey Ferguson 1085, the engine is much quieter - I can actually hear the radio and talk on the cell phone. This tractor has adequate power and is fun to drive. Several of my neighbors have the same model and they all love them.

"Our **Morton** 54 by 105-ft. building with 16-ft. sidewalls is a well designed, attractive building. The materials are top notch and the building crew was a great group to work with. I've received many compliments on it. The building was completed in December 2002."

Brian Field, Port Howe, Nova Scotia: A 2001 **Massey Ferguson** 4253 4-WD loader tractor equipped with a cab is Brian's "best buy." "This tractor has a lot of power and is reasonably fuel efficient, and it comes with a four-year warranty. It's also small enough to work inside barns."



Rick Titus, Clarion, Iowa: Rick liked his **Europa** 75 corn/pellet stove so much he became a dealer (www.pelletstove.com or 877 331-6212). "This stove has 12-volt motors for augers, fans and all the electronics. It uses only about 65 watts. It automatically speeds up all fans and augers or slows them with the change in heat output. Three ash augers remove ash from the burn pot. It uses a gasification process to burn both the corn and the gases produced by the burning corn. The fire spins like a tornado and has a flame that's blue, lavender, purple, yellow, and orange. The prettiest fire I've ever seen. I've been selling wood stoves for 29 years and corn stoves for 20 years, and I've seen or tried just about everything on the market. This is the best one out there."

Lavon Flaherty, Nashville, Ark.: "I'm well satisfied with my 2002 **Deere** 6210 4-WD tractor equipped with a Power Quad transmission and cab. It's a quiet, stable tractor with powerful hydraulics, and I really like the Power Quad transmission. The cab offers good visibility, and the air ride seat and two-way adjustable steering wheel make it comfortable to operate. In my opinion, it would be difficult to improve this tractor."

Dan Homan, David City, Neb.: Dan's impressed with his 1998 **Ford** Explorer and

also his 1999 **Ford** F-250 diesel pickup. "We purchased both vehicles new and have had great luck with both of them. Neither has been back to the dealer except for a Firestone tire recall on the Explorer."

Ed Guran, Rosetown, Sask.: "It's the best tractor I've ever owned," says Ed, pleased with his 1980 **Deere** 4840 2-WD tractor equipped with 23 by 38 dual wheels. "The engine had more than 10,000 hours before it had to be overhauled. We updated it to 4850-style sleeves and pistons in order to get better fuel economy and extra power. The powershift transmission was overhauled at 11,000 hours. I didn't make even one trip to the dealer before those repairs. It's an excellent, clean tractor and doesn't leak oil anywhere. I never bought any accessories for this tractor because it didn't need any. It has a good lighting setup, and the batteries are well located.

"The view from the cab is good on both sides, but the exhaust pipe and air cleaner do block the front view considerably. The cab is equipped with a hydraulic-operated seat, which I really enjoy. I haven't modified this tractor in any way. With new tires, a new engine, and a new power shift assembly, this will be my last tractor in my farming career. Because it took 24 years before this tractor needed repairs of any kind, I don't expect to have to work on it again for a long time.

"My 1969 **Allis Chalmers** XT190 tractor isn't green, but it sure stands up to Deere's long green line as far as quality and durability are concerned. It was my main tractor when I bought it new in 1970. At the time, there wasn't a better tractor anywhere in its category other than the rugged 4010 and 4020, which cost considerably more. It has a lot of power and still doesn't leak any oil even though I've always worked it hard. It has a large roomy cab with a good view. This tractor has a super high-low dual shift transmission that can be shifted any time on-the-go. It shifts smooth, with no clashing of gears. I haven't had any problems with the transmission to this day."

Dan Rossmiller, Brady, Montana: Dan likes his 2003 **REM** 210 grain vac. "This grain vac is about 10 percent faster than the company's older 1026 model and has many more convenient features. After one year of use I can't find any noticeable wear on it."

Patrick McGoldrick, Oxford, Penn.: "My 1996 **Saturn** SL1 car has more than 213,000 miles on it and is still going strong. My only expenses have been for routine maintenance. It's a superb car."

Saturn also makes his "worst buy" list. "My **LW1** has about 113,000 miles on it, and I've already spent more on maintenance for it than I have on the SL1 model at 213,000 miles. Something always seems to be going wrong with it."

Tom Gillfillan, Jackson, Ohio: Tom likes his **Husqvarna** 44-in. zero turn riding mower. "It takes only about half as long to mow as it did with my old 50-in. garden tractor. Also, the clippings come out the rear which eliminates the windrow effect found with old side discharge models."

Richard Ruggles, Marlette, Mich.: Richard's impressed with his 2003 **Deere** 9120 tractor. "It's equipped with a 496 cu. in. engine that's rated at 280 horsepower but feels like it has a lot more. The 24-gear transmission has many working speeds so it's an easy job to find just the right one. This tractor is fuel efficient and has had no problems so far."

Jim Lustfield, Holland, Minn.: Jim's the satisfied owner of a 2003 **Kernel Burner** corn furnace. "We heat our house totally with corn. This corn furnace is very cost efficient

and clean. Keeps us warm and cozy."

Laif Anderson, Pine Bluffs, Wyo.: Laif nominates his 1999 **Bestway** Field Pro II sprayer equipped with X-fold 60-ft. booms as his "best buy." "This sprayer has covered 50,000 to 60,000 acres with very few problems. It's durable, well-built, and handy to use. We use it on our farm and also to do custom work. After five seasons of use the booms are starting to get weak, but the rest of the machine is as tight as the day I bought it.

"My 2001 **Orthman** 8-row one-trip strip till machine is my worst buy. The machine plugged up even in wheat stubble, bending the first row of shanks, which were too light to till deep. The company didn't want to replace them so I upgraded to their new shanks which were unavailable when I purchased the machine. I still had to buy some of the parts. This year I got some relief from my dealer. He put me in touch with a welding company that modified the machine, lengthening the tool frame by 4 inches, which made it work. Orthman still claims their machine is fine and won't approve the changes, but the modification fixed the plugging problem in stubble and I haven't bent a single shank since then. Now the machine works good."

Fred Cailey, Batavia, Ill.: "In your last issue, Bill Reeks of Cromwell, Ky., said he had problems with the front axle and spindle on his 2001 **Sears Craftsman** garden tractor. He ended up rebuilding the broken axle by clamping it back together and welding it properly. So when the front axle failed on our 1998 **Sears Craftsman** garden tractor, I was disappointed but not surprised.

"Following Reeks' experience, I can confirm that Sears does not make a heavy duty axle to replace their standard production front



axle. The standard axle is part number 154427 and costs \$32.99. This axle is made of two pressed steel halves that are about 0.100 in. thick and are joined together with intermittent welds along the seams where the two halves mate. It appears that the axle on our garden tractor failed in about the same location as did the axle on Reeks' tractor - at a high stress point at the end of one of the intermittent welds on the lower left side of the axle.

"After making several phone calls to the company, I ended up talking to a gentleman in the 'research department.' He said there was no history of failed axles except on tractors that had been abused, and that some of the newer Sears tractors did have cast front axles. At a local Sears store I found that the larger Sears tractors do have cast front axles, but the tractor on display that was similar to our tractor had a front axle like ours. I don't believe our tractor was ever abused, but perhaps Sears wants to equate failure to abuse - 'If the axle fails, it means the tractor has been abused.'

"Like Mr. Reeks, I repaired the axle by welding the failed area and adding some doublers. If I end up having to buy a Sears replacement axle, I will completely weld the full length of the seam between the two axle halves. I believe this simple step will greatly improve the integrity of the axle."

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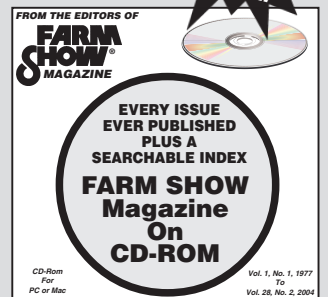
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