

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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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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Brent Norton, Lodi, Ohio: “I read a story in FARM SHOW called “Custom Gaskets For Any Purpose” (Vol. 27, No. 4). It told about **Lubbock Gasket & Supply** (402 19th St., Lubbock, Texas 79401 ph 800 527-2064), a company that will custom-make any size or type of gasket. I needed a gasket for a milk feeder pump, which I could no longer get from the manufacturer. Within 15 days of contacting them I had a new copper gasket that was very well made. The price was good, too. Excellent service.”

Bill Reeks, Cromwell, Ky.: Bill likes his 2001 **Sears Craftsman** 42-in. riding mower equipped with a 17 1/2 hp engine. However, he had a problem with the axle/spindle on the tractor’s left front wheel. “The axle literally broke in two pieces, and the spindle housing split due to poor factory welds and because the metal on the axle was too thin. I was told the company’s new replacement axles are built heavier, so I ordered a complete new axle. However, it turned out to be identical to the first one so I didn’t use it. Instead I rebuilt the broken axle by clamping it back together and then welding it properly. I welded in two 3/8-in. lengths of rebar to the bottom side of the axle to make the axle

rebuilder. Sunstrand paid for the second rebuild but said they would not warranty it again. They blamed the second failure on a lack of oil, which I don’t believe happened. I haven’t altered the hydraulic lines on this combine, and I use New Holland oil and filters.

“While all of this was going on, I learned that the hydraulic pumps on all TR87 and TR97 combines had been recalled by New Holland and were either rebuilt or exchanged. My combine didn’t qualify because I bought it at a farm sale. The dealer said the original owner did not return the combine for the recall.”

Elmer Pinkerton, Elmwood, Neb.: “Fifteen years ago I decided I needed a hearing aid. Our local stores gave me the hard sell and I didn’t believe most of what I was told. Then I heard about **Excell** mail order hearing aids and got their literature (Excel Hearing Solutions, 105 N. First St., DeKalb, Ill. 60115 ph 800 962-0745). You can get a custom made hearing aid from them for only \$499. They provide an easy-to-use kit that lets you make impressions of your ears. The impression guarantees a secure, comfortable fit. Then the company uses high quality components to make a hearing aid for you.

“Mine works perfect and cost only about one third as much as the ones sold in stores. Then five years after I got my hearing aid, it failed and I thought I’d have to pay full price for a new one. However, the company told me the problem was that the hearing aid had excess ear wax in it. They cleaned it and returned it to me post paid at no charge. It’s tough to beat that kind of service.

“The company offers a 45-day risk-free home trial and will refund your money in full if you’re not satisfied for any reason. My hearing aid still works perfect today. They also have a great price on replacement batteries.”

Dennis Anderson, White Bear Lake, Minn.: “My 1978 **International** 184 tractor has a good engine and is easy to maintain. However, it needed some upgrading. I added power steering and 2-spool, double acting hydraulics. I also installed a 3-pt. hitch and a pto converter, which provides me with a standard 540 rpm pto. The tractor is equipped with a **Kwik Way** front-end loader (Sioux Falls, S. Dak.) which works great. It’s also equipped with a steel cab from **Custom Products** in Litchfield, Minn.”

Jim Wiltbank, Velpen, Ind.: “My 1973 **Cub Cadet** 169 mower is my best buy. The engine has never been taken apart and still doesn’t use much oil. The hydraulics still work good, too.”

Larry Boettger, Denison, Iowa: Larry’s had a lot of problems with his 2002 **Polaris** 400 Explorer ATV. “The water pump seal went out with about 30 hours on the tachometer and cost \$120 to repair. I had to have the dealer do the work because the repair required a special tool. Later I found out the company had a recall on the water pump seal, but they wouldn’t pay me for having replaced it. Then at about 45 hours, the left front CV joint went out. The new joint cost \$350 and I replaced it myself. Again, Polaris stuck me with the bill. Then the right CV joint went out, and I paid another \$350. I bought this model because I already had a 1999 Polaris with absolutely no problems with it. I wish I would have kept it.”

Terry Wendorff, Winthrop, Minn.: Terry’s “generally satisfied” with his 2003 **New Holland** TM155 tractor equipped with a **Westendorf** front-end loader. “It steers super easy and is highly maneuverable, and the hood lifts up for easy maintenance. The automatic transmission makes it easy to operate. My only complaint is that the fuel economy could be better. I installed a kit from New Holland that lets me operate the

stronger than new.

“The front wheels on this tractor have bushings that the company calls friction bearings. However, even with regular greasings the lower side of the left front spindle had excessive wear. I used my welder to build up the worn area, then machined it so the wheel would fit properly. After six months of use I’m now satisfied with it. Would I buy another Sears Craftsman garden tractor? Since I’m able to repair the faults on this tractor, I probably would - if I could buy it at a discount like I did this one. I also have a 1996 Sears Craftsman 42-in. mower that has had no problems.”

Dennis D. Hartman, Williamsburg, Mich.: Dennis likes hydraulic products and adhesives sold by **Texas Refining Corp.** of Fort Worth, Texas. He’s particularly impressed with the company’s cartridges for grease guns. “I used this grease on my 1958 David Bradley tractor equipped with a 42-in. mower deck. I had been using a more expensive grease product, but this one is far superior and eliminates the need to regrease in the middle of a job. It won’t drip out of the gun during hot weather like other greases. And it stays nice and soft even in the coldest temperatures.”

Larry Ford, Brooklyn, Iowa: “I’m disappointed with the **Sunstrand** hydrostatic drive in my New Holland TR87 combine. At 1,300 engine hours the pump on it failed while I was going down the road. We removed the pump and motor and took them both to a Sunstrand repair center. Three days and \$3,000 later, we were moving again. But about 30 hours later the rebuilt pump started leaking oil from the input shaft seal. We were able to finish harvest, which took about another 100 hours but it leaked about three quarts of oil during that time. We removed the pump again and took it back to the same