

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Scott Wilson, Stone Mountain, Ga.: "It's the nicest pickup I've ever owned," says Scott about his 2004 Chevrolet 2500 heavy duty crew cab 4-WD equipped with a Duramax diesel engine. "It has plenty of room for my wife and two small children with car seats. The engine runs quiet and the Allison transmission is ultra smooth. It gets 15 to 16 mpg in the city. I haven't had an opportunity to drive it on the road yet, but I'm looking forward to it."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2002 Dodge Ram 1500 crew cab 4-WD pickup equipped with a 5.9-liter, V-8 engine. "Three weeks after I bought it, the top radiator hose began to leak. I also had to have the sliding rear window replaced twice within the first year because it leaked, and the rear carpet had to be replaced as well. The transmission oil cooler began to leak and had to be replaced. The air conditioning went out twice, and the second time the compressor had to be replaced. Then, just before I traded the pickup in for my new Chevy, the blower motor began to make a grinding noise. The fuel economy around town was a horrible 9

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to 10 mpg, and sometimes even worse. I kept the pickup for two years and put only about 25,000 miles on it. This pickup was never mistreated. I wish it could say the same about me."

David Moore, Coleman, Mich.: David's impressed with his 1996 Deere 945 MoCo discbine which he bought used. "I had been cutting hay for years using New Holland haybines equipped with sicklebars. One day my haybine broke down, and I still had about five rounds to cut so I borrowed a neighbor's Deere discbine. It made a believer out of me. It lets you cut hay as fast as you can ride the tractor, and it never plugs up."

Roy L. Gary, Jr., Newsoms, Va.: "I'm happy with my 1998 Cub Cadet 2186 garden tractor equipped with an 18 hp V-twin Kohler gas engine and automatic transmission. I use it with a 44-in. deck to cut an acre of grass once or twice a week. My only expense is for blades and gas. It's a great tractor. I'll always buy Cub Cadets from now on."

Bill White, Bremen, Ga.: "My 1977 Deere 2240 tractor equipped with a 145 front-end loader is my best buy. It has required only one new fan belt and new batteries."

"Other best buys include my 1989 Lely 205 5-disc mower, 1994 Hesston 540 round baler, 1977 Kuhn 14-ft. pull-type hay tedder, and Deere 650 3-pt. side delivery hay rake."

Jim Howard, Waurika, Okla.: "We have about 15,000 cattle on our ranch and use 4-wheelers to do all our cattle work. We keep about eight ATVs going every day. The good ones have 12,000 to 14,000 miles on them before we either trade them or junk them. Sometimes we buy up to four ATVs at a time. There are only two brands that we buy - Polaris and Honda. I think Polaris is the best for ride, handling, and performance. The boss uses that one. Honda is the best for dependability and durability. The hired hands use those because they can't tear them up."

"My Dodge 3500 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and 5-speed transmission is a best buy. It has a rear end with an 4:11 gear ratio, dual wheels, and an 11,000-lb. gross vehicle rating. We use it to pull cake feeders. We've bought six of these pickups in the last eight years. We had been

Ford fans for 25 years and wore out at least 20 of them. The Dodge gets 12 mpg compared to 10 mpg for the Fords. We change the oil on them every 2,500 to 3,000 miles. The Dodges ride smoother across pastures and don't have problems with the glow plugs. They're also about 75 percent cheaper to maintain, and they come with a 7-year, 70,000-mile warranty. Also, Cummins engines don't break down."

"Our two Deere Gators are both worst buys. For what they cost these machines aren't worth a darn."

David Lauzon, Guilford, Vt.: "My Paslode impulse framing nail gun is easy to use and has no air lines. It's very dependable as long as I keep it clean. It has a lot of power to drive nails. I can hang it off my belt or back pocket when climbing ladders."

Robin Wenzl, Steinauer, Neb.: Robin lists his Microtrak 2405 rate controller for anhydrous ammonia and chemicals as his "best buy" (Micro-Trak Systems, Inc., Eagle Lake, Minn. ph 800 328-9613 or 507 257-3600; www.micro-trak.com). "Being a small farmer, I didn't think I could justify the expense for such a product. But now I find that I can't live without it. It lets me apply anhydrous to within one pound per acre and apply chemicals without guessing. It paid for itself in the first two years."

Warren Studer, Hart, Mich.: "My 2001 Central boiler outdoor wood burning furnace is my best buy (ph 800 248-4681 or www.centralboiler.com). It has been all we expected and more. Also, it uses less wood than other brands heating similar size houses."

"My Solochain saw has required only normal maintenance. No problems."

Robert Rodenberg, Norborne, Mo.: Robert's had problems with his Koyker 300 quick-tach front-end loader and bucket. "The quick-tach was anything but quick. I could put my old Deere loader on much faster and wasn't even advertised as a quick-tach model. I put the loader on myself which took 1 1/2 hours. I couldn't put the bucket on because it was made so poorly. I took it back to the dealer and they finally sold me the company's 400 model, which worked better. I'm somewhat satisfied with it."

Herald and Sandra Dill, Niangua, Mo.: "Our 1971 Ford 8000 tractor, and two Ford 7000 Ford tractors made from 1973 to 1975, are all best buys. We still use them to make hay and to do other jobs."

"Our 1990 Bush Hog disc mower is our worst buy. The gearbox had to be repaired, and the sicklebar broke twice."

Robert A. Beil, Fillmore, N.Y.: "My 2001 Dodge Ram 2500 equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and 6-speed transmission is my best buy. It's by far the best pickup I've ever owned. My past six Chevy pickups all had major problems."

Sandra Barrow, Tallahassee, Fla.: "Our 1998 Kubota tractor is equipped with a 5-ft. belly mount mower and an 18 hp engine. It does a good job on our 5-acre lawn and runs all day on seven gallons of gas. It starts easy and never quits, even in tall grass."

Donald Salmen, Wessington Springs, S. Dak.: Donald nominates his 1992 Volvo semi tractor as his "best buy." "I use it during harvest to haul products to market and during the off season to do commercial trucking. I've put more than 400,000 miles on it and have only had to replace a clutch and water pump. Normal maintenance is all it needs. The truck now has a total of 1,310,000 miles on it."

On the minus side, "My Century 170 wire feed welder is difficult to set, especially when welding aluminum, which is the main reason I bought it. It takes a different sleeve when you're welding aluminum than when you're welding mild steel. I finally bought a

separate handle so I wouldn't have to change sleeves, which is a difficult job."

Jay O'Connor, Granite Falls, Minn.: A 2000 Polaris Sportsman 500 rates as Jay's "best buy." "It starts no matter how cold the weather is and is very reliable. I use it to pull hay racks and wagons and for other chores on our farm."

"My 2003 Polaris 90 Predator ATV is my worst buy. I bought it for my grandson, but within a week - and with only two hours on it - gas started leaking out the needle valve. The machine was still under warranty but the dealer said it wasn't covered by the warranty and the company wouldn't pay for it. They said the problem was due to bad fuel."

Delbert Jackson, Bellevue, Iowa: "I own a 2002 Deere 5510 4-WD tractor equipped with a synchromesh transmission. I used it to disk eight acres of plowed ground and it jumped out of gear 32 different times. It was repaired and doesn't jump out of gear much now, but it still doesn't always shift right. If I happen to bump the shift lever it jumps out of gear."

Marvel Nelson, Mineral Point, Wis.: "My 2001 Hewlett-Packard 750 is a great all-in-one printer and copier. We use it to print a newsletter of 280 copies per month. We also have a Hewlett-Packard 612 digital camera. Both the printer-copier and digital camera work great. The camera takes clear photos, and the printer prints beautiful photos anywhere from 3 by 5 to 8 by 10."

Bob Myracle, Baxter, Tenn.: Carson likes his 2001 Kubota 3010 tractor equipped with a front-end loader and hydrostatic transmission. "I use this tractor on ground that's rough and rocky, so the hydrostatic transmission really comes in handy. It works great for loader work and also for mowing."

Ronald E. Blakley, Indianapolis, Ind.: "My best buy was made four years ago when I bought a Power-trac 418 articulated tractor via the internet, directly from the factory



in Tazewell, Va. (ph 800 843-9273 or 276 988-6938; www.Power-Trac.com). I call it my green machine. It has done everything the company said it would, and more. I used it to put in a patio area and driveway that required 39 yards of concrete. This 18 hp marvel moved more than 80 tons of old asphalt, dirt, and gravel, with an inexperienced driver



at the controls. No way would we have tried this without the Power-trac. In less than five minutes I can drop the loader bucket, pick up the mower deck, and groom our yard."

"The company offers about 30 different implements for these tractors. Only a lack of money keeps me from owning all of them. My youngest son tells me I'm obsessed with Ol' Green."

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