

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

(Continued from previous page)

Then both the front tie rod ends bent. The engine uses oil and smokes and is hard to start. Once I get the engine started, it gets hot and then quits running. Then I have to wait until it cools off to start mowing again. This mower has been in the shop more than it has been on our farm. It's a pain in the butt, and in my back pocket."

**John Monsees, San Jose, Calif.:** "My best buy is a small metal cutting bandsaw that I bought from **Harbor Freight** (www.HarborFreightTools.com). I found the blade adjustment feature to be very crude so I changed the design of the adjuster, which made it much easier to set the blade to cut straight. I also added an outer 4-in. table to the original narrow one. It lets me clamp stock to the table instead of having to use the built-in vise and allows me to cut short stock at any angle. It sure beats using a hack saw."

**Vincent Smith, Trout Creek, Montana:** "My worst buy is a **Haulmark** cargo trailer equipped with dual axles (www.Haulmark.com). I special ordered it from the factory in Phoenix, Arizona. When I received the trailer it was scratched up and the roof was all dented and leaked. The braces that hold the sheet metal to the roof were missing screws, and water collected in the depressions whenever it rained. I even found a drill bit that had broken off in the ceiling. When I complained to the factory they offered to fix the problems.

"However, when I got the trailer back it was in even worse shape than before. So I called the company owner in Indiana. He had them build me a new trailer. I loaded it up and headed for Montana.

"While driving in Idaho I realized the front axles weren't supporting any weight because the shackles weren't hooked up the same on both axles. On the rear axle the shackle link was on top, and on the front axle it was on the bottom. As a result, even though the front wheels were on the ground they weren't supporting any weight. Also, the wiring for the turn signals was reversed."

**J. Glenn Fisher, Chickamauga, Ga.:** "I bought a used **Yanmar** 1500 4-WD tractor equipped with a diesel engine. The engine now has about 3,000 hours on it but has never been touched. The tractor is a best buy in every way.

"My 1993 **Ford** F-350 pickup equipped with a diesel engine is my worst buy. A pin-hole developed in the engine's no. 3 cylinder wall and burned a valve only one year after repairs were made to it. The pickup has about 222,000 miles on it."

**Chuck Steptoe, Miller, S. Dak.:** Chuck's the satisfied owner of a **Wallinga** 6614 deluxe grain vac. "It lets me move grain at the most remote bin locations and has totally eliminated the need to use a shovel. It provides dust-free cleanup inside the bins and is easy to move and set up. It works faster than an 8 to 10-in. dia. auger."

**Elmer Pinkerton, Elmwood, Neb.:** "My best buy is the **Grass Gator** head I use on my string trimmer (CMD Products, Lincoln, Calif. ph 916 434-0228). All the other brands I've tried were always a mess to keep working. This one uses any size plastic string cut from bulk spools up to .155 in. diameter. You can use anywhere from one to four strings. It's well worth the \$25 I paid for it and can be adapted to any string trimmer."

**Cletus Schmit, Jesup, Iowa:** "Before harvest last fall I bought **Clever-Tech** straw chopper knives for my Deere 9400 combine and they're my best buy (Clever-Tech, Inc., 4121 South Canfield Road, Jesup, Iowa 50648 ph 319 827-1311). I bought them because the rotor knives on Deere straw choppers aren't heavy enough to handle heavy

straw or wet, green bean stalks. The Clever Tech knife has four sharp rake teeth on it to provide a serrated edge. It's designed to pivot only 10 degrees which forces material through the stationary knives until everything has been cut. My son, Dan and I agree these knives did an excellent job of chopping straw for us last fall, and they didn't show much wear. I'd recommend them to anyone."

**Dale Oldenberg, Medford, Wis.:** "It has a lot of power for its size and handles well in tight spots," says Dale, impressed with his 2001 **Deere** 6410 tractor equipped with a 640 front-end loader. "I had some problems with the hydraulic and injection pumps, but Deere repaired them under warranty."

**Brian Donnelly, Phelps, N.Y.:** "My 2002 **Polaris** 500 Sportsman 4-WDATV is my best buy. It's equipped with an automatic transmission and front and rear independent suspension, a combination that makes for an enjoyable ride. I like the front and rear trays - they aren't just skinny tubes but instead are very modular, which makes them useful for carrying stuff."

**Eldon Reiners, Bucyrus, Mo.:** "Our 1990 **Deere** 170 lawn mower works great. Our **New Holland** 630 4 by 4 round baler is a best buy. Our late model **Allis Chalmers** D14 is an outstanding tractor."

**Wayne F. Pickler, New London, N.C.:** Wayne's the satisfied owner of a 2003 **Fella** 540 4-basket, hydrostatic hay tedder. Fella is a German company and Wayne bought the tedder from its U.S. distributor (Traver Sales, Folsom, Alabama ph 800 848-9303). "This tedder is designed so I don't have to get off the tractor to unfold the machine for field use. Instead, it unfolds with the pull of a rope. Also, once I set the tilt I never have to reset it again. When I get to the field I just pull the rope and I'm ready to go. I like not having to get off the tractor as often when going from field to field. It's a real time saver. The company also makes a 5-basket model.

"About six years ago I bought a **Jesse Machine Works** quick hitch for my Deere 4430 tractor equipped with a 158 front-end loader after reading about it in FARM SHOW (Jessee Machine Works, 1733 Nord Ave., Chico, Calif. 95926 ph 530 342-4379). This hitch is a wonderful piece of equipment and I'd recommend it to anyone. I have nothing but praise for it. I can hook up to my bale forks in less than 5 minutes, whereas it used to take 30 to 45 minutes to do the job."

**"This hitch is a wonderful piece of equipment. I'd recommend it to anyone."**

**John D. Irving, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia:** "My 1986 **DeutzAllis** 4-WD tractor is my best buy. It's highly maneuverable and easy to start and also easy on fuel. It has about 7,800 hours on it with only routine maintenance. The tie rod ends and hinges had no grease fittings and were expensive to replace. However, overall this is a good machine.

"My 1993 **Ford New Holland** 254 rake-tedder is my worst buy. The tires that came with it caused the machine to wrap up in hay and had to be replaced with ones that had a different tread. Another problem is this machine can only be set to do a clean raking job on one side. The roll pins wear and have a short life and the retaining rings on the tine bars don't stay in place, which allows the nylon rollers to come out of the cam guide. As a result the rollers have a short life. The nylon bushings on the tine bars get dirt in them and have to be cleaned out in order to



Roger Foster harvests all his corn with this 1968 Deere 105 combine.

## 1968 Combines Still Going Strong

Roger Foster, Tower Hill, Ill., has his own independent and innovative approach to farming. A good example is how he has modified three vintage Deere combines to fit his operation.

A salesman once commented to Roger that it was about time he buy a new combine. Roger replied, "Well, if you're going to pay for it, fine, but if I'm supposed to pay for it, forget it."

Roger has tailored three 1968 Deere machines to fit his needs, and he gets along just fine with them. Of course, having a natural mechanical talent and a good farm shop are part of the equation.

His Deere 105 is used strictly to harvest corn. Since a return elevator isn't needed in corn, he removed half the fingers at the bottom. Another change was to add filler plates in the cylinder. And, he added a large, hydraulic-operated stalk spreader at the rear to scatter stalks. The cab has also been widened out for easier access and comfort.

The 105 combine still has its original gas engine, but it has been overhauled. In fact, be greased. This machine also has other problems."

**Madeline Davis, Hardwick, Vt.:** Madeline's the proud owner of a 2003 **Ford** Ranger pickup. "We're now driving our third Ranger and we've loved them all. They're fuel efficient. It also has comfortable seats, high and low 4-WD, and fog lights. I like the Ford blue colors. We've found that going with minimum trim works best in this area because there are fewer places for salt to 'catch' during the winter. Also, it makes the pickup easier to wash."

**Don Clements, Wilmer, Ala.:** "My MTD 46-in. riding mower equipped with an 18 1/2 hp Briggs & Stratton engine is my best buy. I use it to cut our five acres of grass. All I've spent on it is fuel and time.

"My **Mantis** rototiller is my worst buy. It just isn't the machine it's advertised to be. I plan to return it to the manufacturer."

**Kate Triplett, Monroe, Wash.:** "My 2000 **DeWalt** 'Fat Boy' cordless 18-volt tool pack is my best buy. It comes with a 1/2-in. reversing hammer drill, circular trim saw, light and reciprocating saw, two batteries, a charging unit and a case. All the tools have ample power but the drill works particularly well. We do construction work so we use these tools hard. The batteries last a long time and recharge fast, and the tools are ergonomic and well constructed. Also, the price was reasonable."

**Joe Mitchell, Marseilles, Ill.:** "It has a lot of power and is quiet and comfortable," reports Joe about his 2003 **Ford** F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a 5.4-liter, V-8 engine. "It works great for pulling heavy loads. I drive

all three of the combines are powered by gas engines which, Foster says, are economical and relatively easy to work on.

The other two combines - another 105 and a model 55 - are used to harvest soybeans. Which machine Foster uses depends a lot on the weather and ground conditions. The 55 model was repowered with a Chevrolet 350 V-8 engine, which is equipped with a Pierce governor to make the combine run at a constant speed. This machine rides on 28.1-in. rice tires and is equipped with a 13 1/2-ft. Hinkler floating cutterbar.

The 105 model has a 20-ft. header equipped with a Deere 220 floating cutterbar. It still has its original 4020 gas engine, which was overhauled once. It's equipped with a straight shift transmission.

Roger says ground conditions sometimes dictate which machine to use. "The 55 model doesn't weigh as much as the 105 and is better balanced," he notes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Foster, Rt. 1, Box 108, Tower Hill, Ill. 62571 (ph 217 567-3417).

it to my job where I work on Chevies and Dodges all day long. When the day is done I get back in my F-250 for a nice ride home. I love my Ford."

On the "worst buy" side, "I bought a 50 by 80-ft. quonset building from **Arch Technology**. They told me how easy and fast it would be to put up and how sturdy it was, etc. However, I found that trying to put up the arches was like trying to handle a 50-ft. Slinky. We've had bad storm damage twice during the past 1 1/2 years but no warranty help was offered. I was very unhappy so I called the dealer to get their crew to finish the last half of the building. They wanted \$16,000 to finish this \$11,000 building."

**Jerry Ewell, Jackson, Tenn.:** "Last year being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Ford Motor Co.**, I thought you might be interested in my worst buy of all time. It was a 1953 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary truck, an F-100 equipped with a 6-cyl. engine. Back then the warranty was for 90 days or 4,000 miles, whichever came first.

"About a week to 10 days after the 90-day warranty was up, I was driving down the road one day and heard a noise under the hood with smoke coming out from underneath it. I discovered the oil bath air cleaner had broken off and dumped oil all over the engine.

"Some time later while diving down the road the engine began to miss, sputter, buck and jump. Finally it died. It took some doing but I found that oil had come up in the distributor and drowned it out. All this time the truck was burning 3 to 4 quarts of oil per 1,000 miles and getting only about 8 to 10 miles per gallon. I complained to the dealer.