

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

baler, or silage chopper, and one that installs on the wagon or trailer.

"I've used this hitch for three years to hook wagons up to my silage chopper. I like never having to get off the tractor," says Bulechek. "It's well-built - I haven't had any problems with it at all. I paid about \$400 for the hitch."

Mike Thompson, Edgewater, Fla.: "The **Cobalt** drill bits I bought from Northern Hydraulics are my worst buy. They rusted wherever I touched them and went dull almost immediately. I paid \$80 for them."

Darrell M. Schrock, Arthur, Ill.: "IPC spray paint is my best buy. It goes on smooth and covers very well without running."

"My **Hitzer** coal stove is my worst buy. The top door was warped which allowed the stove to release carbon monoxide. The stove comes with a 5-year warranty, but I had to pay for a new door even though my stove was only three years old."

John Orth, Greeley, Colo.: A 2002 **Zetor** 3320 tractor equipped with a 46 hp diesel engine rates as John's "best buy". "It has a lot of torque, uses fuel sparingly, and has a comfortable operator's platform. Also, the tractor's height can be changed by rotating the drop housings at each axle."

"My 1998 **Sears** 2-wheeled heavy duty string trimmer is my worst buy. The engine slobbers oil even when it's not operating. It has no torque to speak of and bogs down easily. The height adjustment on the trimmer head jammed shortly after I started using the trimmer and is unusable. When the throttle hand broke off, I replaced it with a handmade wooden one that works much better."

John D. Dewell, Scio, Ohio: "I really like my 1993 **Hardy** outside wood burning furnace. I had a few problems with it which the dealer promptly corrected. We use it to heat our house and it does a wonderful job. We use it to burn everything, including old tires

and tubes, old round bale bags, and garbage. It burns so clean we don't even have to pay for a garbage service. We even use it to heat our drinking water. It works for us 365 days a year."

Duane Helgeland, Wautoma, Wis.: Duane's impressed with his 1996 **Toyota** T100 2-WD pickup equipped with a 6-cyl. engine. "It has more than 100,000 miles on it but still has the original clutch, battery, and exhaust system. It gets 24 mpg. We've used it to haul more than a ton of sand at a time. The only problem was with the air conditioner, and that didn't happen until recently."

Douglas Meyer, Baytown, Texas: "Our 1999 **Honda** 21-in. Harmony self-propelled lawn mower is our best buy. It has been maintenance-free - all we have to do is change the oil. The engine always starts on the first or second pull and runs very quiet. The mower makes a quality cut and has two modes - mulch or bag. The self-propelled ground speed can be adjusted from slow to very fast, so we can do an efficient job of mowing whether the grass is thick or thin."

"Our 2000 **Honda** string trimmer has a 4-cycle engine that's easy to start and quieter than other brands, with low vibration. It has a lot of power and will take a string size of up to .105 inches. Because it has a 4-cycle engine we don't have to mess with mixing 2-cycle gas. It's also designed to operate in any orientation, so we can easily trim around all sorts of objects without stalling the engine. We haven't had any problems with it."

"Our worst buy is a set of **Durabuilt** 1/4-in. drive sockets we bought at Target. We thought we were getting a good deal because they were 75 percent off and were made of chrome-vanadium steel. But when we tried to connect the sockets to the ratchet, they didn't fit - not one of them. Other brand sockets will fit the ratchet, but not Durabuilt's own

sockets! From now on we'll stick with **Snap-On**, **Sears Craftsman**, or **Kobalt** tools."

Robert G. Adams, Humboldt, Iowa: "My 2001 **DR** mower is my worst buy. The string disintegrates whenever it touches cement. I don't use it any more."

"My two **Monarch** steel bins are my best buys, with a qualification. The dealer told me these bins were built like battleships, and they are except for the roofs. To save himself a few dollars the dealer didn't put on the heavy roof but instead substituted a paper-thin roof. We had to add extra rims on top of both roofs to strengthen them so they won't blow off. The dealer is retired now, and the new owners of the business no longer handle **Monarch** bins."

Maria Bixenstine, Lake City, Iowa: "Our **Countryside** multi-fuel corn/pellet stove is our best buy (American Energy Systems, Inc., ph 800 495-3196 or 320 587-6565; website: www.magnumfireplace.com). It's available as a free-standing pedestal model that can be



located virtually anywhere in the home. Another model is designed to convert an existing fireplace into a high efficiency heating system. A gold door and side bars are available for added beauty, as are custom colors and etched glass. We liked this stove so much that we became a dealer."

Terry D. Long, Thornton, Iowa: Terry's disappointed with his 2003 **Sears** 19.2-volt drill. "I used it last June to secure the tin on a storage building that we own. In the process, I had to return the drill four times to get it replaced. In each case the transmission in the drill had stripped the gears. Sears was very helpful each time I came in. I've now purchased a **DeWalt** drill and haven't had any problems with it."

Wayne Sabine, Tilley, New Brunswick: "My **Mastercraft** 9.6-volt cordless drill is my best buy. I received it as a gift a few years ago and have hardly pounded a nail since then. It's probably the most useful and versatile tool I own."

"My **Carraro** 1200 round baler is my worst buy. I bought the first baler in this area from our local Belarus dealer. The dealer spent a lot of time with me trying to get it to work properly. However, he doesn't seem to get a lot of support from the company. I was able to make only about 1,000 bales before I had to replace the gearbox and clutches at a cost of more than \$3,000. The company couldn't tell the dealer how to take the machine apart."

"Whenever I buy a new piece of equipment I try to buy the shop manual for it. With this baler, all I could get, besides a very basic operator's manual, was a parts book. It appears the dealer can't get a shop manual, either. Another company has taken over Carraro and it's now called Galiani. From what I can find out it's essentially the same baler."

Murray Engle, Wagoner, Okla.: "My 1999 **Dodge** 1500 4-WD pickup is my worst buy. It rides so rough that I can feel each tar strip on the highway. The transmission failed completely at 7,000 miles and was rebuilt by the dealer. However, I'm still afraid to go very far from home with this pickup."

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