

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Dennis and Marsha Haubenschild, Princeton, Minn.: According to a story in a recent issue of Agri News, the Haubenschilds are pleased with a manure digester they installed on their 750-cow dairy farm three years ago. The digester produces electricity and reduces odors so effectively it has “greatly exceeded expectations”. The set up cost \$355,000 to build. The couple had expected it to pay for itself within five years, but current projections indicate the digester may pay for itself in only 3 1/2 years because it saves about \$40,000 a year in electricity costs, and also saves about \$400 a month in propane costs for winter barn heating.

Another big advantage is that the digester virtually eliminates odor and fly problems, which is important as the Haubenschilds’ 750-cow farm is located in an area where more non-farmers are moving in. “We should be able to continue operating well into the future because if people can’t smell you, they don’t care what you do,” says Marsha. “You can’t put a dollar value on that. You can spend a lot of money on odor control and still get no income back from it. If you keep the neighbors happy and prevent one lawsuit, the digester may pay for itself,” Dennis told Agri News.

hundreds of holes, and friends have borrowed it from me, too. I’ve used it on three different augers - 6, 9, and 12-in. dia. It’s a great product. I use it a lot because in this area we don’t have single rocks - all our rocks are married and have families.”

Joe Furtwengler, Tuxedo, Md.: “I like my **ClampTite** clamp-making tool that lets me make clamps out of ordinary wire. (ClampTite, 88 Getaway Rd., Hedgesville, W. Va. 25427 ph 800 878-4129). It works great both for emergency repairs and permanent fixes. It has hundreds of uses



around the home, workshop, and garage. For example, it can be used to stop hoses from leaking on the spot and to repair broken tool handles, fences and gates, farm machinery, mufflers. I’ve used it to repair garden hoses and even to clamp lumber together in order to keep it straight. I bought rebar tie wire (at about \$3.50 a spool) that will allow me to make many dozens of clamps for pennies apiece. I’m well satisfied with this tool.”

C. Reinke, Morrison, Tenn.: “My best buy ever was a **Massey Ferguson 550** combine that I bought several years ago.”

Jim Wilson, Carnduff, Sask.: A 1993 **REM 1026** grain vac rates as Jim’s “best buy”. “We use it during winter and summer to load grain into semi trailers. It’ll load 35 to 40 bu. per minute except for during the final stages of bin cleanup. Over the years we’ve used it to load thousands of bushels of grain. It has required very little maintenance.”

Kiley Epperson, Marshall, Texas: Kiley nominates his 2002 **Ford F-350 4-WD** dually pickup as his “best buy”. “It has a lot more power than the 2001 **Dodge 4-WD** dually pickup I previously owned. I haven’t had a bit of trouble with it. I use it to pull a 32-ft. trailer loaded with 15 round bales and can go down the highway with the cruise control set at 75 mph. I love this truck. When it comes to pickups I’ll never buy anything but Ford.

“My 2001 **Dodge 4-WD** dually pickup equipped with a high output Cummins diesel engine and 6-speed transmission is my worst buy. I bought the pickup new, but it fell apart before it had even 9,000 miles on it. The dealer had to install a new windshield, headliner, and complete front end including rotors and tie rods. The biggest problem was that as soon as the engine reached 2,500 rpm’s it ran out of power. It couldn’t even pull a 20-ft. livestock trailer down the road at 60 mph. I finally traded it in for the Ford F-350.”

Eugene St. Jean, Verner, Ontario: Eugene has owned **Allis Chalmers** tractors ever since 1956 and says they’re all “best buys”. “Over the years I’ve farmed with nine different Allis Chalmers models. My favorite was the 190. All of these tractors have a lot of power and traction and are easy to work on. We’ve also used International Harvester Farmalls and they worked good, too, but in my opinion nothing beats Allis Chalmers.”

John K. Kilian, Norlina, N.C.: “I haven’t had any problems with my **Vermeer 504** round baler or my **Krone** disc mower.

“My **Deere 6400** tractor is powered by a 4-cyl. engine that’s very powerful. This

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
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The Haubenschilds say their digester was built in conjunction with an expansion, which allowed barns and digester to be designed at the same time.

The digester they use has a plug-flow design, where manure is removed daily into the digester. The manure is heated to 100 degrees and remains in the digester for about 15 days. The manure produces biogas, which is 60 percent methane and 40 percent carbon dioxide. The biogas is captured and piped to a 125-kilowatt generator, where it’s burned to produce electricity.

After it’s digested, the finished material, known as digestate, is stored in a lagoon until spread on fields.

A big factor in the digester’s success is the farm’s use of newspaper bedding, which is easier for bacteria to break down than straw, says Marsha. Their style of digester requires as dry a manure mix as possible.

Leonard Seltzer, Manhattan, Ill.: Leonard’s unhappy with the **Dakota Alert** wireless driveway alarm that he bought last year. “It’s unreliable and works only sporadically. In damp weather it doesn’t work at all. I returned it to the company a few months ago for repairs, but after I got it back I was able to use it for only a short time before it quit working again. The company wouldn’t refund my money. I guess I just wasted \$200.”

Allan Majorowicz, Success, Mo.: Allan’s impressed with his **Pengo** conversion kit for post hole augers that can dig through rocks. (Pengo Corp., 500 E. Hwy. 10, Laurens, Iowa 50554 ph 800 599-0211). “I’ve used it to dig