

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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Carl E. Miller, Unionville, Iowa: "Our five **Deere** tractors are all best buys. We own a 4430, 4030, 2630, 2020D, and 3010D. All of them are good tractors and only two have required engine overhauls. **FARM SHOW** is also a best buy."

Billy H. Gillespie, Bland, Va.: "My best buy is the **North Star** pressure washer I bought from Northern Hydraulics. I bought it with an optional water-sand blast attachment and an 8-ft. extension for washing houses and barns. Works great."

Neil G. Gow, Appleton, N.Y.: Neil's the satisfied owner of a **Poulan ES300** electric chain saw. "I bought it for \$90 at Home Depot and it has worked well all winter. The automatic oiler is superb. The saw is on its second chain but shows no signs of slowing down. I'm not sure how much wood I've cut with it, but I did recently clean up about 40 gallons of sawdust. My only problem is the ribbing I take from my friends who own gas engine-operated saws."

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"My **Dish 500** satellite receiver is my worst buy. It has been a marginal product from the start. Poor functioning, poor technical support, and a less-than-helpful dealer. It starts losing channels in the slightest drizzle, and the only solution is to buy a \$60 weather cover that should have been included in the original price. After owning a **PrimeStar** dish I'm very disappointed with this one, but **DirecTV** bought out **PrimeStar** so I can't go back. I plan to return to using a plain old rooftop antenna."

Will Brewer, Jackson, Miss.: "My 1998 **Remington 870 Express** 12-gauge shotgun is my best buy. It works well, didn't cost much, and has never had a malfunction of any kind. Disassembling and cleaning it is a simple job. My family and friends have used this gun as much as I have. I added an after-market sling to make it easier to carry on long treks."

On the negative side, he lists the **Briggs & Stratton** vertical shaft engine on his **Murray** riding mower. "I bought this mower to cut a small yard. It soon developed an engine miss that got progressively worse. I took it to the nearest authorized **Briggs & Stratton** repair center. They made the repair but charged \$50 to the retailer I bought the mower from. I was told the problem was that there was trash in the fuel. I have several small engines that use this same fuel with 'trash', and they all run well. To prevent the problem from happening again, I bought a new gas container and made sure the fuel was impeccably clean. However, the next time I used the mower the same problem happened again. I returned the mower to the authorized **Briggs & Stratton** warranty center. They charged me \$50 this time, saying the problem was my fault."

"Before I left the dealer I tried to start the mower, but it wouldn't start. The dealer kept the mower so that a factory representative could check it out. The rep said that the diaphragm in the carburetor had been damaged

by dirt in the fuel. Then I took the mower home but couldn't keep it running for even an hour. I finally junked the mower. I'll continue to use the other **Briggs & Stratton** engines that I already have, but I don't plan to purchase any more new ones. Factory support is poor at best."

Ernest McKenzie, Melfort, Sask.: "My **Honda 185 3-wheel** ATV is my best buy. I bought it used in 1988 and have used it hard ever since, but it just keeps on going."

"My **Clarke Turbo 100 Mig** wire feed welder is my worst buy. It has an erratic arc and the wire feed slips and stops. It's hard to use."

Tim Sollman, Clayton, Wis.: Tim isn't happy with the driveway alarms he bought about seven years ago from **Dakota Alert**. "The alarm system wasn't working so I returned it to the company for repairs. They said the product wasn't under warranty and wouldn't even look at it to see if it could be repaired. However, they said they would sell me a new system. They said parts aren't available for this unit. I guess they haven't heard of **Radio Shack**."

Robert Ellis, High Hill, Mo.: A 1991 **Dodge D250** pickup equipped with a **Cummins 5.9-liter** engine rates as Robert's "best buy". "I've had very few problems with the engine."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1990 **Ford** pickup. "The problems it had were too numerous to mention. I had always been a **Ford** person, but this pickup converted me into a **Dodge** person."

David J. Peckham, Callaway, Neb.: "It gets a lot of hard use, but we've had very little trouble with it," says David about his 1998 **Kawasaki Prairie 400 4-WD** ATV. "The company took care of a few minor problems. I have an artificial leg so I appreciate the automatic transmission. The floor board design is also helpful. There are more powerful ATVs on the market, but after riding them for a while I really came to appreciate this machine."

"My 1979 **Ford F-250 4-WD** pickup is a best buy. It has been all over the country and has been in a few tangles that required some hospitalization, but it came away better for it all."

"My 1972 **Deere 4620** and **3020** tractors are dependable and are best buys."

"I'm well pleased with my **Deere 535** round baler. I've owned **Hesston** and **Gehl** models before but this is the best."

"My biggest disappointments have been with my **Case-IH 470** and **480 21-ft.** disks. In my opinion, these discs were nothing but glorified sheet metal. I sold both of them and bought a **Deere 14-ft.** model. I can cover the same amount of ground as I had been covering with the two **Case-IH** models, and do a better job. No problems."

"My **Hesston 6650** swather is a disaster. I don't understand how a company can even put its name on a machine like this. I wish I still owned my **Deere 1600 14-ft.** hydraswing swather."

"I was given a kit to raise the rear bench seat in my 1985 **Ford Supercab** pickup. It was purchased through **J.C. Whitney** and was something that I had asked for. However, it's a worst buy. The bolt holes in the brackets were about three sizes too big, the washers were too small, and I had to reshape some of them to fit. I was really disappointed with it."

Terry Swearingen, Wyanet, Ill.: "My **Milwaukee 7-in.** side grinder is my best buy. After two years of heavy use, it shot sparks out of the motor vents and lost power. I boxed it up and sent it to a company service center. In less than a week they sent it back to me prepaid with a new armature and brushes. It was covered by the warranty so they didn't charge anything. **Milwaukee** power tools may cost a little more, but they're definitely worth it."

"My **Deere 9500** combine, which I bought used, is my worst buy. The company found out they had some combines with soft crankshafts under the straw walkers and implemented a cost-share program to replace them. It turned out the previous owner didn't participate in the program so the combine sat on the dealer's lot for most of the program's duration. We used this combine for two years before we even knew about the crankshaft problem. By the time we found out about it, the program had expired and the dealership changed hands. Our only recourse was with the company, but a factory block man said he couldn't help us. We're disappointed the company wouldn't stand behind this product."

Alan Millikan, Germanton, N.C.: **J-B Weld** rates as Alan's "best buy" (**J-B Weld Co.**, Box 483, Sulphur Springs, Texas 75483 ph 800 529-3530 or 903 885-7696).

"I still have the original package that I bought with the price sticker on it. I know I've saved hundreds and maybe thousands of dollars by using this product. It's worth many times more than what it sells for," says Alan. **J-B Weld** is sold as an inexpensive alternative to welding, soldering, and brazing and can be used to repair damaged welds and solders. It comes packaged in two tubes. One contains liquid steel/epoxy resin, and the other contains hardener. When mixed together in equal portions, a chemical reaction occurs that turns the mixture into a compound that's said to be as hard and tough as steel.

Like metal, **J-B Weld** can be formed, drilled, ground, tapped, machined, filled, sanded, and painted. It stays pliable for about 30 minutes after mixing, sets in 4 to 6 hours, and cures fully in 15 to 24 hours

John Knierim, Glasgow, Mont.: John's happy with his **Melroe Bobcat 773G** skid steer loader and a **Miller 250 amp** Bobcat engine-drive welder. "Both of these machines were expensive up front, but I wouldn't farm without them. We use them almost every day. The skid loader has run trouble-free from day one and has required only routine maintenance. We've used the welder to repair many cultivators in the field. It's a real time saver because we don't have to waste half the day just getting the machine moved back to the shop so we can repair it."

Richard W. Bergman, Gleason, Wis.: "I like my 1997 **Ryobi 12-volt, 3/8 cordless** drill which we use to tap maple trees. We can tap about 50 trees before the battery has to be recharged. A fuse burned out on the charger last fall but it cost only 75 cents to replace."

Mike A. Ruppert, Wapakoneta, Ohio: "My **Night 8018** manure spreader is my best buy. It spreads evenly, as thin or thick as you need. Best of all, there are no webbs or

chains to mess with."

James R. Hursh, Cropwell, Ala.: James is impressed with his 2000 **Toyota Tundra 2-WD SR5** pickup equipped with a V-8 engine. "It has a lot of power and pulls a load with ease. It gets about 18 mpg which I think is reasonable. It also has plenty of ground clearance and a comfortable ride."

"My **Northstar** log splitter, which I bought from Northern Hydraulics, is powered by a **Honda** gas engine and does an excellent job. For years I had been splitting wood by hand so this hydraulic-operated splitter is a real labor saver."

John Schuster, Cuba City, Wis.: John owns a **DeWalt 4-piece** set of battery-operated tools which includes a skil saw, sawzall, drill, and light. They're all operated by an 18-volt battery. "I used it when I built a 20 by 24-ft. garage with a 12 by 24-ft. lean-to on the back side. The saw and sawzall used up the battery faster and lasted about one hour if they were used hard. However, I got three to four hours of use at a time from the drill unless it hit sappy wood. I'd recommend this 4-piece set to anyone."

Ralph Grote, Decatur, Ind.: "My best buy is my 1978 **Gravelly 817** garden tractor. I use it with a 50-in. mower deck, 30-in. tiller, and a snowblower. It's a real four-season machine. In 1982 I bought a 4-ft. sicklebar mower and adapted it to the tractor's pto and hydraulic lift. I use it to mow side ditches alongside our county roads. I also made a sprayer boom that lets me be on the road and still reach fence lines along fields. I've also used the boom to spot spray thistle patches in our fields. I made my own cab. This tractor seems indestructible."

Charles F. Batson, Hope, Ark.: "My **Belarus 400 AN** tractor has performed well after the factory replaced a casting that was out of round. The test is, would I buy another one? Yes - tomorrow."

"I attended a farm show recently. They had eight brands of tractors on display, and seven of them were made in other countries."

Charles T. Koenig, Cuero, Texas: "My 2000 **Deere 425** garden tractor is my best buy. I owned a smaller **Deere** garden tractor for 10 years before I bought this model. It still has the same great quality."

"My 1993 **Ford 5610 II** tractor equipped with wide rear tires and an extra flow hydraulic pump is a best buy."

"My **Sears Craftsman** high wheel trimmer is my worst buy. The problem is that it leaks oil. I should've known better because I had previously owned a **Sears** riding mower which needed repairs almost every week. However, when my **DR** trimmer finally wore out I decided to try **Sears** one more time, which was a mistake."

Neal Niebruegge, Nebraska City, Neb.: "My 1998 **Kent Discovator** does a good job of leveling the soil, has a lot of trash clearance, and is easy to adjust."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists the **Goodyear Wrangler** tires on his pickup. "All four tires separated down the center. Friends of mine had these tires on their trucks and work vans and had the same problem. The company didn't provide much help."

"I purchased retread tires from **High-Tec Retreading** in Edgemont, S. Dak They've held up well and, at \$49.99 per tire, are a real value."

Greg Neymeyer, Northfield, Minn.: "I bought plans for a do-it-yourself bandsaw mill from **Bill Reeks** in Cromwell, Ky. He