

Best & Worst Buys

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He wouldn't even take my name down so he could get back to me about the problem."

Joe Brabank, Iron River, Mich.: "It starts good in cold weather, gets good fuel mileage, and has plenty of torque," says Joe, whose 1990 Dodge 3/4-ton 4-WD drive pickup equipped with a Cummins turbo-charged engine has nevertheless had some problems. "The 5-speed transmission is noisy and the frame seems to flex causing the truck to chatter easily. It's had lots of problems with small items. For example, all the screws that hold the interior trim were stripped so all the trim fell off. The speedometer, 4-wheel indicator light, dome light, and dash light don't work. The front differential came up and crushed the oil pan, but the company replaced it at no charge and removed the gusset webs from the front differential to keep the problem from happening again. The Michelin tires wore out at 6,000 miles. Michelin replaced them with new ones."

Leland Smith, Charles City, Iowa: Faced with the chore of cutting 3 acres of lawn, Leland purchased a 1991 Arts Way 6-ft. grooming mower. It's a "best buy". "Even when the grass is wet this mower spreads out clippings evenly and leaves our yard looking great."

Leland is disappointed with his 1990 Chevrolet conversion van. "They should extend the warranty for all the miles I've put on it going back to the dealer. The conversion was fine, but the van had a leaky windshield, the tires were out of alignment, a door lock came apart, and a seat belt

about them is that they're tough enough to pull a heavy drill, yet nimble enough to chase cows."

Rick Luft, Wayne, Neb.: "My Motorola mobile phone is very durable. I've carried it all over the farm without breaking it. The reception, sound quality, and tower access are good. I've used it far more than I ever imagined I would."

Jady Gilbert, Snyder, Texas: Jady's "best buy" is a 1988 Toyota 6-cylinder extra cab deluxe pickup. "It has 120,000 miles but still has the original spark plugs and is as fuel efficient as when it was new. It has never been in the shop. I replaced the front brake pads at 60,000 miles and again at 103,000 miles. It costs a total of 32 cents per mile to drive including all expenses for insurance, taxes, fuel, oil, monthly payments, and tires. That compares to about 60 cents per mile for Dodge and about 65 cents for Chevy and Ford. My 4-year-old pickup would sell for about \$6,500 while Ford and Chevies from the same year bring only \$1,500 or so."

Kenneth E. Strebel, Jerseyville, Ill.: "My best buy is Columbia #2000 aluminum fiber roof coating made by Central Petroleum Co., Cleveland, Ohio. I applied one coating to a rusty roof without using any primer. It stopped the rust and looks great. It'll also seal seams, nail heads, and bolt heads so they won't leak. I recommend using it on machine sheds and grain bins. It's supposed to last about 15 years. I was so impressed I became a dealer for the company."

Steven R. Kirkpatrick, Mechanicsville, Iowa: "It does an outstanding job handling trash and is easy to set," says Steven, pleased with his 1990 DMI Tiger Mate field cultivator equipped with a coil tine harrow. "It has done everything the company said it would. I've even used it in standing corn stalks with no plugging. It's built heavy and is an outstanding machine."

On the "worst buy" side, "My Deere 722 mulch finisher equipped with a coil tine harrow is poorly engineered and wouldn't do anything but make ridges. My dealer bent over backwards to solve the problem but had no luck. The company was no help and won't admit they have a problem. I had to use a 15-in. crescent wrench to make adjustments, and whenever I changed fields I had to make adjustments again. It's a big joke. We wish we'd never have seen it. We replaced it with a DMI Tigermate."

Brian Moudry, New Hampton, Iowa: "I'm well pleased with my 1992 Walsh 500-gal. field sprayer. I bought it with the bottom fill option and hydraulic-driven pump. It has a low profile tank and roomy platform for adding chemicals. It's easy and safe to load and operate. It works every bit as good as other sprayers that cost over \$1,000 more."

Vic Stratman, Argyle, Mo.: Vic's disappointed with his New Idea wagon running gear. "It makes it nearly impossible to back up a wagon even when it's empty. One wagon was full of corn and a wheel buckled under even though there was only about 150 bu. in it."

Albers Farm Inc., Chapman, Kan.: "Our best buy Deere 4555 tractor has good torque at low rpm's. It starts right up in 30 degree weather. We use it to pull a Deere 630 28-ft. disk which we also like very well.

We've used it for two years with no repairs."

Albert Heiser, Vesper, Wis.: He says his Noma hydrostatic riding mower handles good (Noma Outdoor Products, P.O. Box 7000, Jackson, Tenn. 38308 ph 901 422-1690). "It's easy to get on and off and the electric clutch is handy. It has an hour meter and a fuel gauge. It's a best buy."

Dale Millburg, Waggoner, Ill.: "My worst buy of all time is my 1982 DMC 179 Stir-ator. Whatever could go wrong, went wrong. It would quit almost every day even with only about 4 ft. of corn in the bin. In 1989 I replaced it with a new Neco Stir-Rite which works great. No down time so far."

"My 1991 Deere 4455 tractor works great and is a best buy."

Michael Limberg, Glenbeulah, Wis.: "It has good power and is easy to drive," says Michael, owner of a "best buy" 1990 Ford 8630 tractor equipped with power shift transmission. "I like the shuttle shift and the ability to program whatever reverse gear you want to use. I also like how the transmission automatically shifts down whenever I come to a complete stop on the road so that when I take off again I don't have to manually shift down."

Lloyd Loop, Bow, Wa.: Lloyd likes his 1991 Chevrolet S-10 4-WD Blazer equipped with a 4.3-liter V-6 engine. "It has fulfilled all my expectations with absolutely no problems. It's a snappy runner and gets about 23 mpg."

Gary Klicko, Wisconsin Dells, Wis.: "My Breezewood band saw mill is a worst buy. It didn't cut true and left the lumber wavy and of varying thickness. The blades lasted only 15 to 20 min. before they needed sharpening. The Tecumseh engine burned too much gas and a new carburetor didn't solve the problem. I was very lucky to sell it and lost only a couple thousand dollars."

Thomas Wessman, Albert City, Iowa: Thomas's "best buy" is a Culti-Vision tractor-mounted mirror that gives him "rear vision" without having to turn his head while cultivating (K-K Mfg. Co., Ken Klingler, Rt. 1, Box 186A, New Ulm, Minn. 56073). "Cultivating small crops had always been a back and neck twisting job. Now with the mirror I can see right where the cultivator is without turning around. It lets me set the cultivator closer to the row and drive faster."

"My Deere 630 disk is a worst buy. The disk itself works alright, but the wings fold so slow that I can almost eat lunch while they're moving up or down. The problem is that the 1/4-in. hydraulic hoses for the cyl-

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inders are too small."

Tom Wencil, Blooming Prairie, Minn.: Tom nominates a 1989 Gehl 3310 skid steer loader as his "best buy". "We tested both Case and Bobcat before we bought Gehl. We prefer its ease of handling, power, and ROPS guard."

"We also like our 1983 International 4000 windrower which we bought used. The 12-ft. double auger head is trouble-free and works well in oats and hay. The crimper has one steel roller and one rubber roller which works better than our previous win-

drower that had two rubber rollers. It has good power. However, I wish it had a variable speed reel so we could go faster in short hay."

Martin Reynolds, Indianola, Iowa: Martin says his 1989 Ford F-250 4-WD diesel pickup "has good power, load capacity and mileage. It has 40,000 miles and I've only had it in the shop twice for minor repairs. It's a best buy."

Paul Pence, Jr., Columbus, Ohio: "The best buy I've ever made in 50 years of farming is our Bobcat 610. It's the second one we've owned and it has over 3,600 hours with very few repairs. We use it for many different jobs including moving gravel, dirt, logs, poles, tile, manure, machinery, hay, straw and anything that needs to be elevated, dug, pushed, turned, etc. We use it every day. We've even been able to do some custom work with it. It turns on a dime and is ready to go any time, in hot or cold weather."

Paul Bennett, Lowry, Minn.: Paul rates his Morris auto reset 4-bottom moldboard plow as a "worst buy". "It wouldn't scour or stay in the ground and wouldn't pull straight. It plugged up in several places - under the frame, between the gauge wheel and frame, and between the furrow wheel and frame. After spending \$50 for phone calls and two months talking to company 'experts', the company finally bought the plow back."

On the "best buy" side, "My Roose hydraulic lift hog trailer has saved hundreds of hours of labor (Roose Mfg. Co., Pella-Knoxville Rd. RFD 3, Pella, Iowa 50219). It adjusts hydraulically from ground level to 50 in. or anywhere in between. I should have bought it years ago."

Ted E. Olson, Lewiston, Minn.: Ted's pleased with his 1989 Case-IH 7130 tractor which he bought used, but says it could use one improvement. "It's a fun tractor to drive, quiet, and has excellent lights for night work. However, the shift linkage wouldn't go into reverse after the tractor wasn't used over winter. The dealer corrected the problem."

Ted's "worst buy" is Onduline roofing that he installed on his 1983 45 by 72-ft. Menard's machine storage shed. "I made the building without any ridge lights or sky lights so I could keep out the birds and it worked. However, within two to three years there were holes around all of the nails in the roof which caused it to leak. Menard's was very cooperative in handling the problem. Onduline finally replaced the roofing material, but I had Menard's tear off the old roofing and install tin. They didn't charge me anything. They even replaced several purlins that had warped from the leakage. I'm told that Menard's no longer constructs any buildings with this roofing. Too many problems."

Wilbert Milleville, Niagara Falls, N.Y.: "We aren't biased toward any particular brand of machinery but no matter the color of the machine, it must perform without much trouble," says Wilbert. "We use Deere, Case-IH, and New Holland equipment side by side. We love our Deere 9500 combine and 347 and 348 balers, our two New Holland self-propelled hay stackers, and our Case-IH swing mower-conditioner."

"Our 1990 Double Rake Hitch built by Ernest Steiner of Dalton, Ohio is a best buy. We own two of them and use them to pull four New Holland rakes. The hitch lets us make single windrows of any width or switch to double windrows right from the tractor seat. The maneuverability and rugged design make it an excellent buy."

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mechanism broke. The dealer repaired the windshield, but then it started leaking in another place so I fixed it. Most of these problems happened before it even had 7,000 miles."

Tony Dyck, Moosehorn, Manitoba: Tony purchased a used 1974 Case 870 diesel loader tractor in 1989 and says it's a "best buy". "It had 7,000 hours when I bought it. It always starts in the winter even when it's not plugged in. I use it to feed cattle and haul hay. It has about 75 hp and handles my front-end loader very well."

Alfred Meyer, Chillicothe, Mo.: Alfred's had good luck with his 1991 Blu-Jet LandTracker 15-ft. implement caddy and couler bar disk and 1991 Case-IH 5400 15-ft. no-till drill. "The drill and caddy are a dream to operate together. The Land-Tracker (Blu-Jet Products, Thurston Mfg. Co., Hwy. 87A, Box 218, Thurston, Neb. 68062) is built heavy and is nearly indestructible. It has both front and rear Cat. III 3-pt. hitches that allow me to mount the couler bar disk on the front hitch and the drill on the rear hitch. The drill is built heavy and is easy to adjust. I really like its extra capacity and wide lids."

"Our two Deere 4020 diesel tractors are also best buys. Both have over 6,000 hours and run and look like new. The best thing