

Best & Worst Buys

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excellent fuel economy, and the forward-reverse shuttle transmission works great for loader work. I wouldn't want to be without it. The quick-tach loader and bucket system work flawlessly. It takes less than 2 min. to change buckets or detach the loader.

"My 1986 Case-IH 1190 mower-conditioner is also a best buy. The only part I've replaced is a belt idler pulley - not one broken section or guard. It cuts heavy alfalfa at 6 mph and does a good job. This machine has a rugged, simple design and is very reliable, like all of my Case-IH equipment. My previous International mower-conditioner served me well for 15 years. No doubt this one will last just as long."

On the "worst buy" side, "My 1987 **Vicon RC 361** rake-tedder makes a nice fluffy windrow, but it's impossible to set it so that it rakes the field clean. It's tricky to adjust and very sensitive as to the combination of pto speed and ground speed. This machine is a disaster in the hands of an inexperienced operator. It's totally useless in a long stubble crop like wheat straw. My old parallel bar rake equipped with basket tilt was a far superior tool."

Dean Clouse, Murdock, Kan.: A 1991 **Deere 630** 20-ft. disk equipped with 24-in. blades on 9-in. spacings rates as Dean's

uneven, took a lot of power to run, and had bearing failures the first month. Parts are hard to get and available C.O.D. cash only. I sold it at a great loss and bought a **Deere 672** mower. It does a good job but costs twice as much. You get what you pay for."

Amos's "best buy" is his **Deere 9500** combine. "It's a pleasure to operate and makes long harvest days seem shorter. It has great capacity, is easy to service, and has reliability that's second to none. Grain quality is excellent. I'm very well pleased with it."

Alan Pegram, Lincoln, Ill.: Alan's "best buy" is his **Robotic Driver** made by **Tri-R Innovations**, Gibson City, Ill. "I use it to cultivate beans. It was very hard to set, but it worked great after I got it adjusted properly."

Chuck Hodel, Eureka, Ill.: "This tractor is the ultimate in design and performance," says Chuck, owner of a 1981 **Steiner S-18** articulated 4-WD 18 hp garden tractor (Steiner Turf Equipment, P.O. Box 85, Orrville, Ohio 44667). "It has hydrostatic drive, big flotation tires, and plenty of power. I can mow 5 ft. wide at high speeds and scrape gravel and dirt like a bulldozer. I've also used it to rake hay and pull wagons around my farm. I can switch implements in 30 seconds. The Deere tractor I owned before didn't begin to compare to this well-engineered tractor."

Jim Schweizer, Olney, Ill.: Jim's unhappy with his 1988 **Ford F-250** 4-WD pickup. "At 22,000 miles it started to use oil and the paint is coming off in places. It rattles a lot and makes a lot of noise. The Firestone tires on it wore out after only 16,000 miles."

"My 1985 **International 1460** combine has great capacity, a quiet cab, is fuel efficient, and easy to service. I've had very little down time and grain quality is excellent."

Thomas Kluck, Rogers, Neb.: "Our worst buy is a 1990 **Lennox 100,000** btu oil-burning furnace. It's noisy, cuts out a lot when running, and often blows cold air. Our old "Williams-Oil-Amatic" furnace lasted 37 years, but I doubt if this one will last five years."

"Our best buy is a **Snapper 2100** HHB gas-powered leaf blower. We bought it to blow off corn leaves and soybean dust that accumulates on our combine. It makes repairs and adjustments much more pleasant. We also use it to blow dust out of the dry air cleaner filter. It works much better than an air compressor because we can use it in the field to clean leaves and trash from the radiator screen on the combine. We also use it to blow snow off equipment and to clean up spilled grain on a concrete slab instead of a broom. It's great!"

Ray Clark, Pontiac, Ill.: "Whether it's not under full load or is just idling, the engine tends to run too cool," says Ray, who's otherwise pleased with his 1989 **White 2-160** tractor. "The Cummins engine has plenty of power and is fuel efficient. The cab is roomy and has good visibility, and the controls are well placed. Cab entry is good with well-placed, wide steps. The seat is comfortable, but it isn't very handy for looking back."

Stephen Ficklin, Onarga, Ill.: "It has done everything the company said it would

and is really paying for itself," says Stephen, pleased with his **M & W 1465** Earthmaster tillage tool which he uses to break up soil compaction. "We had some farms with low spots and poor drainage. Last year we used the Earthmaster to deep till the entire farm, criss crossing the low spots. We didn't have any standing water last fall or early this spring when we had heavy rains. Even in last summer's drought our crops were able to root down. This fall we noticed that it pulled easier. We can tell all of our ground has benefited from reduced soil compaction."

Wilbert R. Knop, Percy, Ill.: "It's a handy, well balanced tractor. I use it every day to carry big round bales," says Wilbert, owner of a 1990 **Massey Ferguson 383** tractor and loader. "It has enough power for all around work and is easy to handle."

Jerry Soukup, Morse Bluff, Neb.: Jerry's "worst buy" is his 1991 **White GRW 6100** planter. "The White 5100 planter I owned previously worked fine, but the 6100 is a joke. The biggest problem is poor seed placement. It produces very uneven stands."

Gordon Wolfel, San Antonio, N.M.: "My 1990 **Fuerst 16-ft.** flexible tine harrow is a best buy and works as well as the manufacturer claims. I use it mainly to incorporate herbicides and spread cow manure in pastures. It does an excellent job."

Grant Pepin, Bark River, Mich.: "My best buy happened two years ago when I followed up on a Farm Show story and purchased a driveway alarm from **Kramer Enterprises** (Dakota City, Neb. 68731). It worked so well that it's become almost a necessity on our farm. A recent lightning strike damaged it. I contacted the company and they repaired it, then returned it by priority mail. To find a product that lives up to its claims and comes with quality service is rare."

Kurt Tewes, Frankfort, Ill.: "It's the best tractor I've ever owned. I just can't drive it enough," reports Kurt, pleased with his 1990 **Case-IH 5130** Maxxum tractor. "It's very quiet and shifts smooth. It has good power and fuel economy and pulls my 14-ft. no-till drill with ease. Every farmer should own a Maxxum."

Mark Pettit, Burnside, Ill.: "A 1991 **Deere 9500** combine rates as Mark's "best

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buy". "It's much more comfortable than our **Deere 8820** and has much better vision because of the longer feederhouse and centered cab. It has better steering column adjustment and better control locations, and the swing-away panels and easy access to the engine make it much easier to service. Grain quality is excellent, too."

On the "worst buy" side, "Our 1991 **White 6100** 16-row planter was unable to plant our corn crop as fast as our previous **International 8-row** planter. After all the success of White's 5100 planter, we were greatly disappointed. Seed spacing was up to 2 ft. apart in corn. Some planter boxes were half full when others were empty, and the greasable hinge pins on the markers broke several times. We also had problems with the electric solenoids, transport wheels, chain and seed discs, and twisting of row units which

are too lightweight."

Jonas Toews, Elma, Manitoba: "We're very pleased with our 1991 **Case-IH 7110** tractor. We like the power shift transmission and good overall handling. The cab is very quiet."

"Our **Orthman** guidance system is also a best buy. It keeps our cultivator right on the row and lets us cultivate much closer to crops."

Donald Ziebell, Monee, Ill.: Donald nominates his 1990 **Kuhn** gyrorake, model GA300GM, as a "best buy". "It makes good corners and nice fluffy windrows. It gets all the hay no matter how short it is and lets us drive as fast as ground conditions permit."

Ronald Fever, El Paso, Ill.: Ronald's had good luck with his 1991 **McFarlane 34-ft.** hydraulic lift harrow. "I used it to level and seal in moisture after drilling soybeans. The harrow has eight flex bars that are heavy and rugged, yet it's easy to pull behind the tractor. It takes only a couple of minutes to fold or unfold for transport or fieldwork. I definitely recommend it."

He's disappointed with his 1991 **Sunstar Simplicity 20** hp lawn tractor equipped with a 48-in. mower. "It developed several hydraulic leaks which were promptly fixed by the dealer. The speed control lever moves forward on its own causing the tractor's speed to continually increase. The area where the mower belt runs inside the mower deck isn't fully covered, allowing grass clippings to enter. The only way to clean it out is to remove the deck from the tractor and then remove the cover. The rollers at the rear of the deck don't extend to the edges of the mower deck, causing the mower to scalp the lawn on uneven terrain. On the plus side, the 20 hp Kohler engine is equipped with an oil pump and filter and has ample power, and the transmission power lock rear end comes in handy for mowing ditches."

John Jimerson, Nathrop, Colo.: "My 1989 **Kawasaki KLF 300** Bayou 4-wheeler ATV is a best buy. It always starts good in cold weather and pulls my wood splitter and trailer with no problems. It uses very little gas."

Roger E. Schnell, Amboy, Ill.: Roger is the owner of a 1991 **Chevrolet K2500** 3/4-ton, 8,600-lb. capacity heavy-duty pickup. It's equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine and 4-speed automatic transmission, GR-245-16 tires, and has a rear axle ratio of 4:10 to 1. "Everything about it is fine except for the fuel economy. We get 10 mpg on short trips and maybe up to 12 mpg on long trips. Big semi trucks get nearly as much mileage pulling 72,000 lbs. of gross weight."

On the "best buy" side is a 1979 **Deutz DX-140** tractor bought used with 3,000 hours. "After rebuilding the fuel pump and injectors we're very pleased with it. The 140 hp engine is very easy on fuel and the cab is comfortable. The entire tractor is designed well. The best part was that it cost \$10,000 less than a comparable **Deere 4440** tractor."

Donald Lippett, Geneseo, Ill.: "My 1989 **Vermeer 605-J** round baler makes nice bales and is a well-built machine. It's a best buy."

On the negative side, "My 1988 **Deere 2555** tractor is equipped with mechanical front wheel drive and a 245 front-end loader. It has lots of power and handles nice and hasn't given me a lot of trouble, but the starter seems a little weak for cold weather. The hydraulic system overheats on hydraulic motors that require 5 gal. or more per minute."

"This machine is a disaster in the hands of an inexperienced operator."

"best buy". "The two end blades on the front gangs kept breaking, but the company installed heavier blades to solve the problem. It does a nice job now."

Edgar Shields, Sulphur Rock, Ark.: "It has operated trouble-free for over 550 hours so far and gets excellent fuel economy," says Edgar about his "best buy" 1990 **IMT 539** tractor.

Arthur Kohls, Ellsworth, Kan.: "My 1969 **Deere 4020** tractor is my best buy ever. It has 8,200 hours and I've changed the oil 82 times. It's trouble-free."

Neil Walter, Oglesby, Texas: Neil's happy with his 1984 **Deere 4250** tractor but says he feels the engine uses too much oil. "It started using a lot of oil at about 9,500 hours and now uses one quart of oil per day at full throttle when pulling a heavy load. I always used Deere oil and changed it exactly on schedule. The 15-speed powershift transmission lets me take advantage of all the engine's power."

Marvin Dranselka, Wayne, Neb.: A 1991 **Ford Ranger** extended cab pickup equipped with an automatic transmission and 4-liter engine heads Marvin's "best buy" list. "It's the quietest pickup I've ever owned. It gets good gas mileage and the 4-liter engine works great."

He says **Crow's** seed corn is also a "best buy". "It's competitive both in quality and price, and it's family owned which is a big plus."

Amos Brubaker, Ina, Ill.: Amos had trouble with his 1990 **Hi-Co 60-in.** grooming mower. "It ate up drive belts, mowed