

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Buddy Stubbs, Fort Gibson, Okla.: Buddy's "worst buy" is his 1987 Massey-Ferguson 3545 tractor. "The transmission went out at about 120 hours and the tractor was in the shop for six weeks. We used it again for about 4 months and it started leaking badly again in the same location. This time the shop kept it for five weeks. We then used it for only 4 more months before the reverse clutch pack went out. This time we fixed it ourselves and so far it's still working. We're keeping our fingers crossed."

Buddy's satisfied with his 1990 Donahue 24 by 8-ft. implement trailer. "I use it to move planters, chisel plows, cultivators, combine headers, and anything else that's too wide for narrow bridges and gates or that presents a traffic problem. The trailer is equipped with an optional drop hitch."

Wayne Colson, Caledonia, Miss.: Wayne's happy with his 1990 Deere 2955 tractor. "It handles great, shifts smooth, has great lugging power and a nice cab. It's trouble-free."

"Marketing information from Data Transmission Network is a best buy DTN, Corp., 9110 Dodge Rd., Suite 200, Omaha, Neb. 68114). The equipment has been dependable and the marketing information is

problem is even worse. The front wheels bind when I turn short, making it almost impossible to back up a 4-wheel wagon even with the front wheel drive locked out. The company installed a change-over kit, but it doesn't help much. Because it's so hard to disengage I leave it in 4-WD more than I should, which causes the front tires to wear prematurely. The bolts in the front hubs wouldn't stay tight so the company installed different parts in the hubs. The tractor was in the shop for 19 days. That's a lot of downtime for a tractor that was bought to do daily feeding. It's more downtime than I've had on some 20-year-old tractors that I still use. The belly bolts won't stay tight. The company installed a different gasket but it didn't help. The pto wouldn't stop turning and I was told it was because I had used the tractor to pull a Bush Hog. It was repaired in December, but by the following spring we had the problem again even though I never had a rotary mower on it all winter.

"Several problems make it a nuisance to operate. When the temperature gets close to 32 degrees it won't start. It burns out thermo start units faster than I can replace them. I overhauled the electrical system myself and now it usually starts until the temperature reaches 20 degrees. The fuel shutoff works so hard that I've broke one already. They cost about \$30. If an accident occurred you'd never get it shut off very fast. The seat is poorly designed. It holds water and doesn't flip up, so if I get off to open a gate in snow or rain and don't have a sack with me, I have a wet butt when I get back on the tractor. First gear and reverse gear aren't synchromeshed as they should be for loader work, and the safety start switch is on the high-low range. What a waste of time. The first and reverse levers always have to be moved when I go into a shed. For a high-priced investment this is a very unsatisfactory tractor."

Robert Samuelson, Puryear, Tenn.: A 1991 Ford Ranger extended cab pickup equipped with a 4-liter V-6 engine and automatic overdrive transmission is Robert's "best buy". "It rides and handles well and gets good mileage. The only thing I don't like about it are the Firestone tires. Three of them went flat after only 500 miles when stones punched holes in them. I hauled the tires 70 miles to a Firestone store, but the manager wouldn't even touch them because they weren't purchased in his store. Firestone's consumer affairs department said I could return the bad tires and pay half price for new ones. That didn't seem like a good deal to me. Now I'm using tires purchased from my local co-operative. I've had no problems with them."

Gene Wiemers, Melbourne, Iowa: "My 1990 Case-IH Magnum 7130 equipped with front wheel drive is a best buy. It's very comfortable to operate, has a nice transmission, a comfortable seat, and excellent visibility. Front wheel assist really makes a difference. The 3-pt. hitch has a lot of lift."

Dean McIntosh, Missouri Valley, Iowa: Dean's had good luck with a Deere 885 ridge till/no-till 8-row cultivator. "It doesn't plug and really moves fast in trashy conditions. Adjustable row-guard discs let me get in close to the row. However, the cultivator is so heavy it takes a large tractor or lift assist wheel to pick it up safely."

Harold D. Lowry, Fibre, Mich.: Harold says his 1990 Dodge 2-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and automatic transmission is a "best buy". "No problems after 30,000 miles. It gets 23 to 24

very up to date. The weather radar picture is handy, too."

John Smith, Neenah, Wis.: He says his Stihl 015 14-in. chain saw "always starts and is easy on gas. I've heated my home with the wood it cut for over 10 years now."

"My Last Perch sparrow trap has failed to catch one sparrow."

Robert L. Dunlap, Eaton, Ohio: "I wish the 1,000 rpm pto was 1 3/8 in. in diameter," says Robert, who is otherwise pleased with his 1988 Deere 4850 tractor. "It has adequate power and the automatic transmission shifts well."

Gene A. Wagner, Concordia, Mo.: Gene isn't pleased with his 1988 Massey-Ferguson 390 front wheel drive tractor and 838 front-end loader. "The first time I used the loader it couldn't lift anything. For five months the company tried to solve the problem by installing bigger cylinders, etc. I was told they were designing a new loader and that I could exchange my loader for a new one. It took 11 months before they finally showed up with a new loader. The new loader has a quick-tach mount for changing loader tools but the latches are poorly designed and won't hold. About the time I get back to the seat they fall down. Sometimes this happens a half dozen times while I'm trying to change attachments. The loader itself won't stay up and 'leaks' down so fast that it's dangerous."

"Then there's the tractor. The power steering doesn't work when the tractor is sitting still, and when the loader is mounted the