

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

In the July-August, 1989 issue of FARM SHOW (Vol. 13, No.4), Minnesota dairyman Mike Zeig, of Sleepy Eye, voiced his displeasure with Bou-Matic® Flo-Star® milking claws because of severe mastitis problems and his contention that "the company made four changes in equipment design to try to correct the problem, which led me to believe they never field tested the equipment to begin with."

Officials of Bou-Matic maintain that Zeig's statements in the article are "false and defamatory" and that "the true facts concerning the matter are as follows:

"On April 4, 1988, Bou-Matic representatives visited the Mike Zeig Dairy Farm to evaluate the possible causes of the mastitis flareup in Mr. Zeig's herd. The Bou-Matic Flo-Star claws were tested with vacuum recorders under operating conditions and found to be performing satisfactorily. As a follow-up, Bou-Matic arranged for a herd culture to be performed to determine the source of the infection on the Zeig farm. Results of the herd culture by Dr. Gary Neubauer, veterinarian, revealed that the micro-organism causing the mastitis was a staph aureus bacteria. No correlation was found to exist between the Flo-Star milking claws and the mastitis outbreak on the Zeig

"Further sources to ascertain with definiteness and certainty the true facts regarding the Bou-Matic Flo-Star milking claws are available by contacting: Robert W. Smith, Dave Dallman or John Perez; Bou-Matic; P.O. Box 8050; Madison, Wis. 53708 (ph 608 222-3484)."

Norman Varner, Buffalo, Minn.: A 1989 Case 1840 Uniload equipped with a 50 hp Cummins diesel engine rates as Norman's "best buy". "It starts easy in cold weather and handles well. We use it to feed silage to our cattle, to clean feedlots, and to push snow. It has lots of lugging power even at half throttle.

"Our 1988 ProQuality hay basket is another best buy. It self-loads behind the baler and unloads just by opening the rear gate. It's simple but it works."

Charles Crampton, Tallahassee Fl.: Charles is impressed with his 1990 Ford F-250 Supercab 4-WD XLT Lariat pickup equipped with a 7.3 liter diesel engine and E40D transmission (automatic overdrive). "It has great pulling power, improved fuel economy, and plenty of room in the cab for kids and cargo."

Dale Seyfred, Galien, Mich.: Dale is the satisfied owner of a DMCCalc-U-Dri which he installed on his Shivers in-bin continuous flow grain dryer last fall. "It automatically tests and regulates grain moisture which allows me to sell corn that's more uniform in moisture content. It also eliminates overdrying and the need to take samples all the time."

James Hilton, Athens, Me.: "I've used it on 350 acres and haven't plugged it up yet," says James, pleased with his 1988 Deere 1350 8-ft. disc mower-conditioner. "Repairs have been limited to a few knives that cost only \$1.50 apiece."

James also likes his Fahr 16-ft. tedder, the second one he's owned. "It's reliable and really covers ground fast."

Norman Farrington, Olin, Iowa: Norman's "best buy" is his 1988 Deere 530 round baler. "This is my second 530 baler. I used the first one for 3 years and made 8,000 bales. This one's made 7,000 bales. Very few problems with either baler."

"My 1988 Vicor 1350 double wheel rake is another best buy. It rakes fast with very little leaf loss. We had some trouble at first but service was good and we ended up with an even stronger machine"

Ralph Arnold, Keosauqua, Iowa: His 1989 Dodge Aries automobile heads his "best buy" list. "It isn't a Chrysler New Yorker, but it's a good little vehicle that gets 25 to over 30 mpg depending on length of drive."

Lowell Gehrls, Dixon, Iowa: Lowell nominates his 1989 Kubota 5030 front wheel drive tractor equipped with a shuttle transmission and front-end loader as a "best buy". "It's fuel efficient, starts at 20° below without a plug-in heater, and the loader is easy to get on and off. This tractor replaced my Deere 2640 which started had a clutch that had to be replaced 3 times during 2,600 hours of use."

Lynn Whittlesey, Atwater, Ohio: "It's trouble free, easy to operate, and does everything the company said it would," says Lynn, happy owner of a 1989 Hardy outside woodburning furnace.

Clarence Fitchett, Locustville, Va.: "My 1990 Hardi model 650ICM sprayer is a best buy. I've used it to spray more than 1,000 acres of wheat with only one minor problem - a set screw that wasn't tightened at the factory."

Robert Bristle, Brooklyn, Mich.:

farm. Bou-Matic did change the tops on the claws, the milk tubes and the weight of the claws installed on the Zeig farm.

"The true facts regarding the field testing of the Bou-Matic Flo-Star claw are as follows:

"The development of the Bou-Matic Flo-Star claw began in 1981 and went through an extensive testing program. Tests were conducted on performance of the Flo-Star claw by various agencies throughout the world. Some of the observations regarding the test results are as follows:

"David Williams, vice president, S.C. Phd., Scientific Officer, Milking Resource Center, Department of Agriculture, Werribee, Australia: The claw has been well accepted by the milking operators and has performed excellently in all standard tests which include the valuation of ease and handling, efficiency of vacuum shutoff at short milk tube nipples, influence of the vacuum on distribution of teat cup wear on the udder, compatibility with cleaning systems, ease of cleaning, strength and impact tests, etc. In summary, it is our assessment that this is a particularly useful claw with a number of excellent design innovations and it is likely to become a performance bench mark to assess other claws."

"Animal Science Extension, University of California, Davis: No doubt the new claw had reduced vacuum variation when compared to the standard. The new claw milked the cows rapidly and completely with minimal teat and vacuum fluctuations.