

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

Jack Bowyer, Goodman, Mo.: "I think it might work okay if hay was stemmy, 18-in. long or longer, at least 20% moisture and the wind wasn't blowing," says Jack about his **Owatonna** 590 round baler. "I bought it new last year. It was my first round baler. The first problem was tying. It'd never leave the cut string the same length. I worked on the knife, tension, tried heavy and light twine, but nothing helped. If twine was too short, there was no way to start it tying except to get off the tractor. If it was too long, the wind would blow it over the side of the baler or else it'd get caught in the bale. As hay gets dry, the bale may stop turning which makes a real mess. The dealer came out and painted the rollers with sand impregnated paint. It doesn't help. The bale kicker is a real dud. On level ground it works 90% of the time. The other 10%, the gate grazes the bales as it comes down and with gritty paint on the rollers, it cuts every string on the bale. If hay is dry or short, it won't stay in the throat. Also, the chain sprocket which runs the pickup is enclosed in a metal enclosure and within 15 minutes it's jammed with hay leaves which keeps the chain dry and prevents any lubrication of the chain."

Ken Preston, Wheatland, Ind.: "My best buy is a 1986 F-150 Ford

1985 Toyota 1-ton with 5-speed manual shift transmission. "Has lots of power and the suspension to carry a 1-ton load. Has been trouble-free except for one carburetor adjustment that was free."

Bill Menzel, Holmdel, N.J.: "Our most satisfying purchase is a 1986 Ford TW-25 with mfwd. With 145 hp., it has all the power and comfort we could ask for. We now have 836 hrs. on it with no maintenance except for oil and filters. The tractor has a radar readout monitor, which is a must when you're putting down weed killer and working ground at the same time. Our next tractor will be another Ford."

Steve Ogden, Lexington, Ky.: "I nominate my Vermeer 605J round baler with VCS-3 monitor and auto-weave system as best buy. After baling 550 bales with it in 1986, it still amazes me and everyone who watches it in operation. Its electro-hydraulic steering system and monitor is far ahead of all other brands. There's no need to constantly look back or watch the monitor. The bales are virtually perfect every time and rolled tighter than bales from other makes I considered. It consistently beats the Deere 530 baler by 200-lbs per bale. The standard haysaver wheels work great and lifts with the pick-up when it's raised to the transport position."

Louis Riou, Arborfield, Sask.: "Last year I bought a new 8-hp. Troy-Bilt rotary tiller with which I'm very pleased. It's ruggedly built and has a good warranty. The only drawback is that it doesn't have a differential which makes it hard turning corners."

Joe K. Gans, Fairview, Alb.: Joe names his 1985 Deere 7720 Titan II combine as "best buy". "Has lots of capacity and, for its size, is fairly efficient on fuel. I also like the general handling of the machine."

Les Peterson, Ovid, Col.: "My 1983 Ford Ranger pickup used oil from the day I bought it. The dealer rebuilt the engine at 24,000 miles. It failed again at 38,000. I replaced throw out bearings three times. The poor quality interior wore out at 2,800 miles, the cab wasn't dust or wind-tight and the hood, doors and window glass were hard to open in any type of ice storm. Also, the oil pan drain was located over the steering axle and the oil filter was very hard to reach and change."

However, Les likes his 1982 Versatile 835 4-WD tractor. "Excellent fuel economy, ample horsepower and well constructed. Only repair so far was to replace the clutch at 3,800 hrs. My one complaint is that it came with poor quality seat suspension."

Allen Sommers, Schellsburg, Penn.: He nominates his 1986 Slurry Buggy 1500 vacuum tank spreader as "best buy". "It's heavy built, does a super job and is fast loading and unloading."

Tom Smith, Courtenay, B.C.: "My best buy is a 1980 GMC Heavy Half pickup. I now have over 86,000 miles on it with no repairs. On a long run I've gotten up to 27 mpg. Has lots of power."

"My worst buy is a Ford BTC 70B pressure pump. About a month before the warranty was up, it quit working. The cylinder was scored up by a piece that had come off the piston. It was fixed under warranty. Two weeks after the the warranty expired, it went 'gunny-sack' again. There's no more pressure than from an ordinary tap."

Ronald Larson, Harwood, No. Dak.: "I've had my McKee round baler for about 3 years. Very reliable and can bale anything. Features a fixed bale

pickup with 302 V-8 engine and automatic overdrive transmission. Gets up to 18 mpg with plenty of power and provides excellent riding comfort. In 20,000 miles it hasn't had even a minor problem.

"Another best buy is a Poulan 14-in. chain saw that's now 15 years old. I use it for cutting everything from brush to large trees. Handles great and is easy to start. Has only required routine maintenance."

Brad Proctor, Cortland, N.Y.: He nominates his 1983 Honda ATC 200 as "best buy". "Saves us many steps. Works great for rounding up cows in the pasture, building and fixing fence or just running errands. The main downfall of the ATC 200 is keeping good brakes on it. Other than that we haven't had any problems."

"We also like our Deere 3020 gas engine tractor that we got in 1968. Gives a comfortable ride and is easy to operate. Works great with a loader for cleaning barns and making silage piles because it's weighted just right."

Allan Slater, Lakeside, Ont.: "My 1983 GMC S-15 1/2-ton pickup with 4-speed manual transmission lacked power from the start. The suspension was too light for the 1/2-ton load. I had transmission troubles and had to wait 3 weeks for parts during planting. When the clutch went out I waited 2 weeks for parts."

He traded the pickup for his "best buy"