

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

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use
the survey form on our website at
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or E-mail your comments to:
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John A. Christensen, Wessington, S. Dak.: “I use my 2013 **Kubota** GX135 loader tractor to load feed during winter and bale hay during summer. It’s a little small for such work, but has held up well. It’s easy on fuel and has had only minor problems.

“I traded my older **Hesston** windrower in for a new **Hesston** Challenger WR9760 self-propelled discbine just off the assembly line. I bought it sight unseen thinking it would work at least as well as the older model, which had cut thousands of acres without breaking a single rock guard. However, the rock guards on the new machine are engineered totally different. They’re very weak and break easily. Also, they’re held on with small 3/8-in. bolts that break easily, and because the broken bolts are screwed into the discbine platform, they’re hard to get out.

“Company fieldmen came out and I’ve written to the company but got no response. The salesman told me one of his other customers tried to solve the problem by welding all his rock guards together. I finally did that this spring, and it helped a lot. New **Holland**, **McDon** and **Deere** still make their discbines with solid rock guards, and they use much larger bolts.

at each of 3 locations: our free stall facility, our feed center, and the dry cow area. The larvae pupate and then emerge as wasps that are smaller than a gnat. They mate and lay eggs in fly pupae, which the emerging wasp larvae then eat.

“We also use a misting system in the freestall and dry cow area that repels flies, and we used about 20 lbs. of fly bait this past year. The wasps don’t do it all, but they take the edge off. We’ve reduced the use of pesticides in the dairy by about 85 percent.

“If you walk through the dairy, you have to really look for them, but they are there, burrowing into fly nests and laying eggs.

“The company doesn’t advertise, but you can reach them by phone (800 832-1113) or on their web page (www.kunafin.com).”

Douglas Henson, Las Cruces, N. Mex.: “I bought my 2010 **DR** 17 hp walk-behind **Field** and **Brush Mower** used at an auction last fall as a backup to my tractor-mounted bush hog. It turned out to be a good plan because the tractor broke down this spring and I was still able to keep the weeds down in my 2 1/2-acre pecan grove. This walk-behind mower can handle tall, wet grassy weeds better than my tractor mower.”

On the “worst buy” side, “I needed various sizes of screw-type hose clamps, so last spring I bought a hose clamp kit from **Harbor Freight**. I’ve had both good and bad luck with their products in the past, but I figured no one could mess up something as simple as a hose clamp. Apparently the Chinese can because the clamps all stripped at about 15 lbs. of torque, making them completely useless. From now on, whenever I need small parts I’m going back to **True Value Hardware**.”

Ernest Wayne Kelly, Nennan, Ga.: Ernest likes his **EGO** battery-operated chainsaw and leaf blower (www.egopowerplus.com; ph 855 346-5656). “Both tools have plenty of power and a long battery life and are well designed. Both use the same 5.6-volt battery so I can keep one battery charging while using the other one. The best part is that I don’t have to start a 2-cycle engine.”

Romane Dold, Currie, Minn.: Romane’s the satisfied owner of a 2001 **Deere** STX18 zero turn riding mower. “This is the only **Deere** zero-turn mower equipped with a steering wheel instead of steering levers, and I like it. I don’t know why the company quit the steering wheel design. The engine has more than 1,800 hrs. on it but still runs great.”

John Telford, State College, Penn.: A diesel-powered **Kubota** BX2200 loader tractor rates as John’s “best buy”. “It always starts in cold weather and has plenty of power to remove deep snow.

“My 2010 **Ford** Ranger pickup locked me out during a raging storm. I stepped out of the vehicle while it was running to help my wife load parcels, and the door locked. The dealer wanted to charge me \$200 to disable this feature, but instead I fixed it myself using wire cutters. No more electronic lock.”

Bill Halstead, Lacey, Mich.: “My best buy turned out to be free. We drove 100 miles on a cold, icy day to attend a farm show in Ft. Wayne, Ind., changing roads 2 or 3 times on the way because of traffic accidents. We toured the show and on the way out filled out the door prize ticket. When we got home there was a message on my answering machine to call the show. I had won the big door prize - a new **Kawasaki** Mule.

“We use our Mule every day on the farm to haul wood, fix fences, and much more. It’s an excellent machine.”

Don and Gloria Holt, Nordman, Idaho: “Our 2001 **Toyota** Echo has more than 180,000 miles on it with no problems. I replaced the spark plugs and fan belt at about 100,000 miles. It still has the original battery and gets 42 to 45 mpg.”

“I recently had to replace an air conditioning hose because a hole wore in the hose where it was pulled tight around a corner. The machine’s one-year warranty had expired, so including labor I had to pay more than \$800 for a \$70 hose – all because of an assembly error.

“I’ve had numerous other issues with this machine, including bolts that worked loose allowing parts to come apart and get damaged. A set screw on a pulley came loose and the pulley slid out of place and got wrecked. It took days to get a new pulley and then more time to install it. The set screw should have been tightened at the factory.

“I like a lot of features on this \$137,000 windrower. However, when a neighbor who’s in the market for a self-propelled windrower recently called and asked me how I liked my Challenger, I recommended that he look at other brands.”

Brad Vold, Glenwood, Minn.: “Wasp larvae in a bag are a best buy at **Dorrich Dairy**, our family dairy farm. With 400 cows, there is a lot of manure, and that can attract flies.



A neighbor told us about **Kunafin** fly control (Vol. 32, No. 3). We tried it and it works.

“Once a week we spread a bag of larvae