

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

By: Mark Newhall
Editor

Bill Gergen
Associate Editor

Jim Houtsma
Associate Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Carl Schwab, Andover, S. Dak.: “Our worst buy is a pair of **POMA** folding air seeder markers. At first I was impressed with the lightweight and ingenious folding mechanism on these sideways-folding markers. When extended, the markers are supported by a caster wheel assembly equipped with a pneumatic tire. This allows the marker frame to be lightweight.

“The first season we ran the markers we had repeated problems with the caster wheels breaking off. Ninety percent of our seeding downtime was due to this problem. Prior to the second season I rebuilt the caster kingpin assembly, beefing it up. The second season, the marker frames began to crack and break. One of the hydraulic cylinder mounts broke off and the support cables broke. We also had trouble keeping the markers in their saddles when they were folded up. They would swing outward a foot or two, which made fenced headlands a particular challenge. Both seasons, we seeded the last two days without the markers because we became so frustrated with the constant problems. We removed the markers prior to this planting season and threw them in the weeds. As long as I don’t trip on them or hit them with the mower they shouldn’t cause any more problems.”

needed is regular maintenance. I bought it to replace my 1985 250 Fourtrax which was also reliable. Honda makes good 4-wheelers.”

Roman Schroeder, Washington, Mo.: “I like my 1996 **New Holland** 654 round baler equipped with the silage bale kit. Except for a few minor problems it’s been trouble-free. The knob for adjusting bale density fell off somewhere in one of my fields last year and the company won’t replace it.

“I’m disappointed with my 1995 **GMX** magnetic water conditioning system. It uses magnets that clamp to the water pipes and are supposed to prevent lime buildup in the water heater and water lines. However, it didn’t work. I would have got the same result if I’d just taped some cow magnets to my water lines.”

Jerry Matousek, Prairie du Chien, Wis.: “It’s fuel efficient and does a lot of work for a 36 hp tractor,” says Jerry about his **Belarus** 310. “I use it to farm 18 acres of corn and bean ground. At times I wish it was a 45 hp tractor, but it does well for its size.”

Dick Gardner, Roscommon, Mich.: Dick’s impressed with his 1994 **New Idea** 5209 disc mower. “The thicker the hay the better it seems to cut. It does a great job on down and tangled hay and has never plugged up. I can mow with it as fast as I can stay in the tractor seat. The cut hay dries considerably faster than it does with a sickle mower. It takes only three minutes to change a broken knife.”

Dan Farrand, Long Valley, N.J.: Dan’s not happy with his **White** 271 Rockflex disk. “We broke more axles in two years using this disk than we did in 10 years with our old rigid disk.”

On the “best buy” side, “Our **Deere** 7800 MFD tractor is almost perfect. It’s easy to operate and has a comfortable cab with an excellent view. It also has a lot of power.

“We like our **Gleaner** R42 4-WD combine. We had a wet fall last year and the 4-WD paid for itself.

“Our **Kinze** 2500 twinline 8-row planter is a best buy. It places the seed very accurately which results in good stands. It’s a real pleasure to watch it pivot hydraulically and then drive down the road.”

Ken Brown, Harrison, Mich.: “My worst buy is my 1992 **New Holland** 415 discbine. The constant velocity pto shafts wore out while the machine was still under warranty and two more times after the warranty had expired. The problem is that the pto shafts don’t have enough surface resistance and wear quickly. Another problem was that the cutterbar’s flotation springs broke. Also, when a disc hits a stone the weakest link is usually an expensive gear, which breaks.”

Larry M. Moore, Hull, Ill.: “My 12-row **Black Machine** planter equipped with an interplanter does everything the company says it will. It’s easy to fold and is built heavy. You can tell a farmer helped design it. My only complaint is that it could use a better monitor pickup.”

John A. Boogaart, Blenheim, Ontario: John’s the satisfied owner of a 1995 **Ford New Holland** 8340 front wheel assist tractor equipped with a 456 cu. in. turbocharged diesel engine and SLE cab. “We traded in two tractors for it, hoping that it would do the work of both, and it met all our expectations. The 115 hp turbocharged diesel engine has a lot of power and can handle our 6-bottom moldboard plow and 24-ft. ‘S’-tine field cultivator with ease. Even with front

Bob Sparks, Bovina, Texas: “My **Hydra-Bed** pickup-mounted bale mover saves a lot of time and effort. It lets me load two round bales on my truck and go 60 mph down the highway. Eliminates the need to use a tractor and trailer in the field to load bales. I’ve used the loading arms to also pick up plows, irrigation engines, and anything else I need to move. The arms can also be used to drive in T fence posts and to pull posts out of the ground.”

Gary D. Braaten, Austin, Minn.: “I’m impressed with my 1996 **Case-IH** 7220 front wheel assist tractor. It’s the first piece of red equipment I’ve ever owned. So far it has performed even beyond my expectations. It has a lot of power, is fuel efficient, and the transmission runs smooth with excellent gear selections. It has a nice cab with good visibility, a wide door, and easy-to-reach controls. It’s not often you can buy something new without having a few problems. But after one year and 400 hours, no problems. I couldn’t have finished plowing last fall without the front wheel assist.

“My 1995 **Deere** 425 all wheel steer riding lawn mower equipped with a 54-in. deck is easy to use and is comfortable. We had a couple of minor problems on it which the dealer promptly fixed. It’s an easy machine to operate and has cut our mowing time in half.”

Jeff Ernst, Sibley, Iowa: A 1995 **Honda** 300 Fourtrax 2-WD ATV rates as Jeff’s “best buy”. “I use it for spraying, checking crops, doing chores, and other jobs. All it has