

the ropes. However, we can hardly go an entire day without having to make a repair or two. Seems like there are always problems with either the electric pumps or the wiring. Also, the rope wick bar is so heavy that the toolbar that supports it is always breaking, or else the bolts that support the toolbar break."

W.G. Thompson, Jewell, Kan.: "My **Grasshopper** 612 mower is easy to service and cuts up close, which saves a lot of trimming."

Bill Rempp, Montezuma, Iowa: Two **Deere** 3020 diesel tractors - a 1969 and a 1970 - head Bill's all-time "best buy" list. "Both of them have more than 6,000 hours. Over the years we've used them for cultivating, mowing, baling, hauling manure, powering augers, and a lot of other jobs. They've saved a lot of hours on our larger tractors and have had few repairs. I plan to use them for many more years."

George Vonderheide, Elgin, Ill.: "The **Stihl** AV41 chain saw I bought in 1985 is my best buy. I've used it a lot and have worn

"They've saved us a lot of hours on our larger tractors and have had few repairs."

out eight chains and one bar, but it still runs flawlessly.

"My two **Toyota** pickups are both best buys. The 1989 model has 104,000 miles and the 1994 model has 89,000 miles. Both are equipped with 4-cyl. engines and neither have many problems. I'm well pleased with both of them."

Alan Hilt, Waverly, Neb.: Alan's the satisfied owner of a **Gnuse** 3-pt. mounted loader bucket. "It's built heavy and can be hooked up to a quick hitch. Works great for digging out tile stand pipes and is the best thing for snow removal I've ever seen."

"I'm well pleased with my two **Deere** 4440 tractors as well as my **Deere** 4455 and 7800 tractors. They're reliable and have made my job a whole lot easier."

He's not as happy with his 1996 **Kinze** 2500 8-row planter. "I had trouble with oil-impregnated bushings that are used to turn the insecticide boxes on and off. They turn so hard that the main planter shaft twisted off instead of the cotter key that should have sheared. I have a lot of friends who own the same planter and have the same problem. It has caused me a lot of downtime. Otherwise I like the planter, especially the fold-down markers, the top drive, and the simplicity of design. It's amazing how what appears to be a small problem can turn into a big headache when you're trying to get a crop in."

Verlyn Rieck, Luzerne, Iowa: Verlyn owns a 1995 **Dodge** 1500 WS pickup. "It's got air conditioning and is equipped with a 'work saver' package for farm use. It has a low list price and the 6-cyl. engine gets 19 to 20 mpg. It rides and drives better than most cars."

Duane Starkweather, Amboy, Minn.: A **DR** trimmer mower (Country Home Products, Ferry Road, Box 89, Charlotte, Vt. 05445) rates as Duane's "best buy". "It has big wheels so it rolls easily and the 5 hp **Briggs & Stratton** engine starts easy and runs quiet. Lets me trim around anything with ease."

Owen Ory, Larsen, Wis.: Owen's "best buy" is his 1997 **Ford** F-150 4-WD pickup. "The 6-cyl. engine has a lot of power and it

rides nice, and we like the new look. However, we wish it were available with more choices of color."

Charles A. Starnes, Waldo, Ark.: Charles is the satisfied owner of a 1993 **Dodge** 250 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and 5-speed manual transmission. "It has unlimited towing power, rides nice, and averages 23 mpg. The only problem is the injector pump. It failed at 6,000 miles and was replaced under warranty. Then it failed again at 13,000 miles and was again replaced under warranty. I haven't had any more problems with it."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Sears** 18 hp riding mower equipped with a Briggs & Stratton engine and a 44-in. deck. "The engine used a lot of oil from the beginning, even though I ran it slightly slower than the recommended cutting speed in order to break it in. Also, the mandrels on the deck wore out quickly. They didn't have grease fittings so they couldn't be repacked. Buying this machine was an expensive mistake."

Bruce D. Noel, Leslie, Mich.: Bruce has had good luck with his **International** 5400 no-till drill equipped with a **Blu-Jet** 15-ft. coulters cart. "It's easy to control coulters depth, handles trash well, and has a good monitor. My only complaint is that the disc scrapers are hard to adjust."

Earl A. Juelfs, Fults, Ill.: "My worst buy is a 1989 **White** riding mower equipped with a 12 1/2 hp engine. Every time I tried to use it something broke or else it wouldn't start. I finally traded it in for a **Simplicity** mower and like it a lot. I'd recommend it to anyone."

On the positive side, "Two years ago I bought a 1992 **Dodge** Dakota 8-cyl. longbed pickup and it's a best buy. It has 30,000 miles with no problems. It has a lot of power and can easily pull my livestock trailer or my 18-ft. flatbed trailer. It rides like a car and has plenty of room inside and outside."

David G. Scott, Carleton Place, Ontario: David nominates his 1993 **Gehl** 1470 round baler as his "best buy". "It's equipped with a 'total density' control system that lets me make nice firm bales. I had a few problems at first with the electric tie system but they were soon fixed."

Carl Zisner, Maquoketa, Iowa: "I really like my 1991 **Ford** New Holland 7740 tractor. I use it to grind feed, plant corn, cultivate, spray crops, haul bales, etc. It's the handiest and most reliable tractor I've ever owned. It has 2,500 hours with no problems."

On the negative side, "The minimum till fertilizer openers on my 1994 **White** 6600 planter don't work well in corn residue. They constantly plug up with pieces of stalks and cobs. They're absolutely junk. The company should refund my money. Otherwise the planter works great and I've had great dealer support on the fertilizer opener problems."

Kenneth Hamilton, Hudson Bay, Sask.: "Our best buy in recent years is our 1983 **Wilrich** 4153 27 1/2-ft. air seeder. We bought it used and it did require some repairs, but overall it has worked well. It's simple to operate and places seed accurately. It has cut our input costs by reducing the number of passes needed to seed crops."

Woodrow McHargue, Princeton, Mo.: Woodrow mounts a **Kansas Klipper** brush cutting shear on a **Bobcat** 742B skid steer loader and says they're both "best buys". "The two work well together because the skid steer is so maneuverable. The single blade shear is far superior to other two-

bladed ones. I bought the **Bobcat** just to cut brush but have found it to be the handiest all-around machine I've ever owned. I built my own forklift and bale prong for it. I can't believe how much better it works inside a hay shed than a conventional tractor. I can even use it to stack round bales."

Edwin J. Smith, Medina, N.Y.: "My **Stihl** 064 chain saw works well and starts up every time."

"My 1990 **Kubota** 8950 tractor has more than 5,000 hours on it yet I've hardly spent anything on it. Starts right up at 15 degrees below zero as long as I use the glow plug for about three seconds. I just bought another one."

"Our 1985 **Allis-Chalmers** 6080 tractor was a lemon from the start. We had problems with the clutch and transmission. It was in the shop every winter for five to six weeks for repairs."

Ronald G. Wyatt, Hydro, Okla.: "It's the best pickup I've ever owned," says Ronald about his 1989 **Dodge** 250 4-WD pickup equipped with a **Cummins** diesel engine and 5-speed manual transmission. "I put 20,000 to 25,000 miles on it every year, but it still has the same power and fuel economy that it had when it was new and doesn't use even a quart of oil between changes. I usually change oil every 4,000 to 5,000 miles. I use it to haul livestock, hay, equipment, etc. It rides a little rough but I expected that with a heavy duty pickup. I do wish that it had an extended cab. When I decide to trade it in I'll probably buy another Dodge."

Herb Christensen, Clarkfield, Minn.: An **Ecowater Systems** rust remover, softener, and filter rates as Herb's "worst buy". "Less than three months after we bought the system we had rust in our water - the water was hard and water that came out of the filter stunk and wasn't drinkable. I contacted Good Housekeeping magazine, which guaranteed the product. They conveyed my complaints to the company which then sent someone out. I was told that my water system didn't have enough pressure for regeneration so I increased the pressure until it finally broke the bladder in the pressure tank, but it didn't help. Finally the company

"It's the handiest all-around machine I've ever owned."

told me that the mineral bed needed to be regenerated with potassium permanganate. However, by that time my 1-year warranty was up so I was on my own. I'm now using rain water from my cistern. It remains fairly soft even though I run it through the **Ecowater System**."

Dale Kimball, Spirit Lake, Iowa: "My **White** 6100 8-row 36-in. air planter is my best buy. It's equipped with a 7-row splitter that allows me to plant fifteen 18-in. rows of soybeans which I believe is better than drilling. It's had only a few minor problems which the dealer promptly handled."

"I really like my **Case-IH** 7110 Magnum front wheel assist tractor. It's rated at 120 hp but can do about anything my 160 hp **Case** 2390 can do. In fact, it outperforms the older tractor in mud."

Robert Janes, Alden, Iowa: "I've had good luck with my 1996 **Deere** 8300 tractor. It has a short turning radius even when I set it up for 30-in. rows. The cab gives me a good view and the controls are right at my

fingertips. It has excellent torque and power at all rpm's and is user friendly."

"My 1995 **Deere** 9400 combine is a best buy. This is my second 9400 and both of them have been great. It has a lot of power and capacity for my 6-row 30-in. corn head and 20-ft. bean platform. I like the 17-ft. unloading auger and **Vittetoe** chaff spreader that I mounted on it. It's a combine that's easy to operate."

James Pangrac, Solomon, Kan.: James is impressed with his 1994 **Belarus** 572 front wheel assist tractor. "It has a lot of power and has been almost maintenance-free. I really like the front wheel assist. I recently traded it in for a bigger 825 model which I also like."

On the negative side, he lists his 1995 **Ford** F-150 extended cab 4-WD pickup. "I had to have the front wheel hubs and transfer case worked on before it even had 7,000 miles. The front end made noises and the dash rattled. It did ride good, though. I traded it in for a 1996 **Dodge** extended cab pickup which I like."

D.R. Sloan, Wills Point, Texas: "I'm totally pleased with it," says D.R. about his 1993 **Case-IH** 395 tractor equipped with a **Bush Hog** front-end loader. "It has never failed me. I was worried that it wouldn't have enough power, but it'll easily pull a three-bottom 16-in. plow as deep as it will go."

Ronald J. Fitzgerald, Seeley's Bay, Ontario: "It rides and drives well and has enough power to carry a good-sized load. It's also fuel efficient," says Ronald, satisfied with his 1994 **Dodge** Ram 1500 1/2-ton SLT pickup.

A 1989 **Ford** 150 Explorer rates as Ronald's "worst buy". "It had problems with the paint peeling. The company repainted it at about 8,000 miles but the paint peeled again. They refused to paint it again so my dealer painted it for me at no cost. I've driven Fords all my life, and on every one I've owned since 1970 the exhaust manifold has cracked. It seems to me that 20 years should be enough time to correct the problem."

Jim White, Clark Fork, Idaho: "I have run a **Freeman** 200 T baler since 1974 and it's made over 200,000 bales with a minimum of down time. The operator's manual works great for trouble shooting. In good crop conditions and with consistent windrows I can average about 200 95-lb. bales per hour. I operate it at 70 strokes per minute and it usually punches out a bale every 12 to 17 strokes. It'll keep tying bales in the evening dew when my neighbors with red and green machines have to quit."

"Another advantage is that I can make my own parts for much of the machine - it doesn't have any fixed center belts, alloy tines, or other exotic parts that have to come from the dealer. I've broken two needles and replaced the knotters three times. I keep an inventory of spare parts on hand including knotters and needles, pickup reel tines, etc. I wouldn't trade my Freeman for any two new balers on the market, no matter what the brand."

Larry A. Bauer, Brighton, Colo.: He's disappointed with his 1996 **Coleman** Powermate 5 hp 80-gal. vertical air compressor. "It had a valve plate gasket that was blown before I ever used it. It took more than a month to get replacement parts, and I had them installed by a service technician. However, as soon as I started the compressor up the gasket blew again. I called the

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