

Best & Worst Buys

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plaint is that it's difficult to change the settings on the plastic seed cup gates. I'd like to see them modified for easier field adjustment when planting different size beans, etc. I hope the company will change them on our drill."

Jerrell Taylor, Minco, Okla.: Jerrell's happy with his 1993 **Deere** 7600 tractor. "We use it to handle 4 by 8-ft. bales and the tractor's Power Quad transmission lets us shift from forward to reverse without clutching and no jerking. The cab provides a good view and has a comfortable air ride seat. It's also a good tractor for pto work."

Paul Erickson, Roseau, Minn.: "It's fuel efficient and has a quiet cab with a lot of room," says Paul about his 1994 **Dodge** 1500 4-WD pickup equipped with a 318 cu. in. engine and automatic transmission. "No problems after 32,000 miles."

"My worst buy is my 1989 **Ford** XLT 4-WD supercab pickup with a 302 cu. in. engine and automatic transmission. It gets only 10 to 12 mpg. The paint is peeling off the hood and the electric windows and locks have failed repeatedly."

John Slater, Olin, Iowa: John purchased two self-loading gravity baskets for small square bales from **E-Z Trail** two years ago and says they're both best buys (E-Z Trail, Inc., Box 268, Arthur, Ill. 61911). The baler pushes bales up a self-loading chute and into the wagon to eliminate the need for a bale thrower. A rope-operated latch allows the operator to unload a full load of bales with a tug of the rope from the tractor seat. "The wagons save labor and time. With one pull of a lever I can unload 100 square bales at a time. Using two of these wagons is like having three conventional wagons."

On the minus side, he's disappointed with his 1995 **Deere** 494 corn header. "The fit and finish was poor - one of the outside divider points was off by 3 to 4 inches. A company block man came out and decided that the header frame was out of tolerance when it was welded together at the factory. The company replaced the frame for us, but it never should have left the factory this way."

Larry Chancellor, Arcola, Ill.: Larry installed a 1995 **Ag Leader** 2000 grain yield monitor on his **Case-IH** 1680 combine. "It was easy to install and simple to calibrate, and it measured yields accurately to within 2 percent as promised. My unit was updated twice at no cost. I highly recommend it."

He's not as happy with 1994 "Infielder" computerized crop records systems by **Monsanto**. "The first software programs had several problems. I was promised there would be seminars, but I was never contacted and never received any information. Finally I received new software updates last fall. I still haven't received any newsletter or further information."

Tim Stengel, Milbank, S. Dak.: Tim bought an **Aqua-Therm** outside woodburning furnace 13 years ago and says it's his "best buy" (Aqua-Therm, Rt. 1, Box 1, Brooten, Minn.; ph 800 325-2760 or 612 346-2264). "It's still going strong and has saved me about \$12,000 in heating costs."

"My **Farmhand** 258 front-end loader is my worst buy. The 'premium steel' on the bucket is a joke. The bucket started to twist and bend from the start. I had to rebuild it."

John H. Latimer, Sulphur Springs,

Texas: "I bought a used 1989 **Chevrolet** C10 4-WD pickup with 130,000 miles on it and I've gone over 30,000 miles with no problems. Now it has over 166,000 miles. I was concerned about the 305 cu. in. engine but haven't had any problems with it. I love this pickup and plan to put 100,000 more miles on it before trading it."

Bruce Malcolm, Emigrant, Mont.: Bruce's **Deere** 1470 12-ft. rotary mower has reduced his hay cutting time by 1/3 to 1/2 and is a "best buy". "It's simple to maintain and the blades are easy to keep sharp. I haven't plugged it up yet."

"I also like a cattle sorting stick made by **Koehn** (Koehn Marketing Co., Box 577, Watertown, S. Dak. 57201 ph 800 658-3998). Works great for sorting cows and for holding cows back when I'm working with baby calves. It's durable and effective. The only problem is that other people always want to borrow it. I had to put my name on it so I could keep it."

Thomas Wessman, Albert City, Iowa: "I like my 1992 **Honda** 300 4-wheeler ATV. I raise hogs in a pasture farrowing operation, and during the farrowing season it gets

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so busy that my Honda hardly cools down during the day. It saves a lot of steps. I also use it to haul bales and to pull feeders and trailers. It goes through mud that I can't even walk through."

William Kohl, Appleton, Wis.: "I've never had to do anything to it except for routine maintenance," says William, who owns a 1988 **Chevrolet** K1500 4-WD pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. V-8 engine and 4-speed automatic transmission with overdrive. "I change the oil every 3,000 miles. It has over 120,000 miles on it but still doesn't use any oil. I took it to a dealer recently for a checkup and was told that it's still in like-new condition. It still has the original paint job with no signs of rust anywhere."

Ellis Jones, Lakewood, Colo.: "My 1996 **Subaru** Legacy Outback 4-WD sport utility wagon is my best buy. The 2.5-liter engine is responsive, easy on fuel, and quiet. I like having 4-WD when driving on snow-packed or wet or icy roads. It has excellent ground clearance and handles like a passenger car. We're well pleased with it and would recommend it to anyone who wants comfort, safety, and a vehicle for all road conditions."

Roy Knibb, Harrisonville, Mo.: Roy's pleased with his 1993 **Deere** 6 by 4 Gator. "It has excellent flotation and is easy to get on and off, and the bed works great for hauling feed. We also use it to take soil samples and to spot spray weeds."

Kevin Brown, Bellevue, Iowa: Kevin nominates his 1995 **Ag Wrap** round bale wrapper as his "best buy" (Ag Industrial Equipment Co., Inc., Rising Sun, Md.). "It's built rugged and simple from common box steel and off-the-shelf hydraulic components that are widely available. It's simple to op-

erate with no bells or whistles and is priced several thousand dollars under more elaborate machines but does just as good a job as they do. I used it to wrap about 400 bales last year with no problems. I'm well pleased with the quality of silage bales that I've wrapped with it."

"I also like my 1994 **M & W Gear** 4500 round baler. It's well designed and well built. It uses heavy chain drives and bars to compress the bale which eliminates belts and all the related problems. I can go out and bale any crop that the pickup can get into the chamber. It's easy to operate and maintain and reduces dust and leaf loss."

Don Oswald, Manson, Iowa: Don's the owner of a 1996 **Chevrolet** 1-ton dually pickup equipped with a **Vortec** 7400 engine. "It's the first pickup I've had in quite a while that I didn't have to take back to the dealer during the first 10,000 miles. It rides comfortably, is quiet, and has a lot of power. No problems after 17,000 miles."

John E. Albert, Madawaska, Maine: John nominates his 1985 **Belarus** 5170 tractor equipped with a **Hardy** front-end loader as "best buy". "I've used it a lot and it's been trouble-free except for a few oil leaks. Considering that it cost only about 40 percent as much as other brands, I can take a few minutes to repair the leaks."

Larry Johnson, Coney, Wash.: Larry's impressed with his 1995 **Same** Frutetto 6011 4-WD orchard tractor that's made in Italy and distributed by **Agco**. "It has a quiet cab, a lot of room, and great visibility. It's a compact, heavy duty, narrow tractor that has great lighting for night work and can keep going in muddy conditions. However, I wish it had a better pto setup. The pto has its own separate manual clutch so I have to use both the hand clutch and the foot clutch in order to engage the pto. I'd like to engage it with one lever like on **Deere** tractors. Also, the tractor doesn't turn sharp even when the brakes are applied."

Norris Maydew, Lebanon, Kan.: "My 1988 **Honda** TR300 4-wheeler ATV is my best buy. It starts right up every day whether it's 10 degrees below zero or 110 above. Some days we start it up 20 or 30 times. We use it to check on cattle in winter and to spray musk thistles in the summer. It never gets hot. It has the original battery, starter, and generator. The tires finally wore out last year. I haven't done anything to the engine."

"Another best buy is the cart and round bale carrier that I made to use with my horses in bad weather conditions. It consists



of a cable-operated hay fork which is controlled from the cart. I can always load and haul bales no matter how deep the mud or snow is and I don't have to start a tractor."

Arden Johnson, Scandia, Minn.: "I like my **New Holland** 166 windrow inverter. It turns hay over more uniformly than a rake which allows the damp underside of the windrow to dry rapidly. Last year we had a lot of wet weather and without the inverter I would've had a hard time putting up any dry hay. Another advantage is that it's gentle on hay which results in less leaf loss than you get with a rake. I recommend purchasing the optional second gauge wheel."

"I purchased a **Deere** 6400L MFWD tractor equipped with a front-end loader last year. I'm quite happy with it although it's

hard for me to call it a best buy given how much it cost. The front wheel assist is a vast improvement for loader work and also improves performance in the field. It also improves steering and control on hillsides when cutting hay. I like the **Power Quad** transmission because it offers clutchless shifting and a lot of gears between 4 and 6 mph. It's quite a contrast to the transmission on the **Deere** 2630 that I had been using. It didn't have a good gear for cutting hay so I went through a lot of clutches."

"I like the clutchless shifting and the number of gears it offers between 4 and 6 mph."

"My **DeLaval** feed cart has saved many hours of feeding time and allows increased frequency of feeding which improves cow performance, primarily in butterfat test. However, it has broken down too often and it isn't easy to work on. Also, parts for it are expensive."

Lue Reynolds, Pequot Lakes, Minn.: Lue's impressed with his 1994 **Gehl** 3-pt. disc mower, model DM 165, which cuts a 9-ft. 2-in. swath and is equipped with 7 discs and 2 blades. "It cuts clean and is trouble-free and easy to maintain. I use it to mow 125 to 140 acres of hay per year. The dealer brought it out on a rainy day and we hooked it up to my **IH** 706 diesel tractor between showers, then started cutting in a field that had waist-high clover and timothy. We made one round and adjusted the mower's four drive belts. Then it started to rain hard. It rained about 2 inches but we kept going. The mower cut clean and didn't plug up. We were able to go 6 to 7 miles per hour without stopping. One problem was that when we sized the pto shaft we cut it 1 1/2 in. too short which caused it to break away. However, the dealer replaced the shaft at no cost. I like being able to mow 6 to 7 miles per hour with no problems and the mower was priced right too. I'd recommend it to anyone."

David Skornia, Boyne City, Mich.: "My 1993 **Case-IH** 1845C uni-loader is my best buy. It's well designed, easy to maintain, easy to operate, and has smooth running hydraulics. I'm always finding new uses for it."

"I'm pleased with my **E-Z Trail** self-loading gravity basket for hauling hay bales. It greatly reduces labor requirements for putting up small square bales. Lets me dump bales inside my barn or in large piles to be loaded later. I'll never chase after bales dropped in the field again. It's an economical way for a small farm to automate."

Menno Fast, Newton, Kan.: "The outside woodburning furnace I bought from **Crosswinds Wood Energy Corp.** is my best buy (Rt. 4, Box 402, Hwy. 63 N., West Plains, Mo. 65775 ph 417 256-8155). It heats our four-bedroom house adequately even in the coldest weather. It has shake grates and a thermostat that controls the draft so it won't overheat. A thermostat in the plenum controls a fan that blows heated air through the house's duct system. It has an efficient heat exchanger. The heat doesn't go directly up the chimney but instead is blown over the plenum where it gives up a lot of heat before going up the chimney."