

Best & Worst Buys

(Continued from previous page)

the motor would stall every time we released the wand trigger. We sent it back to the company for repairs, but it still had problems when it was returned. The on/off switch has been repaired or replaced twice, and it won't start at all when the temperature is less than 40 degrees above zero. We've been 'patching it up' ourselves to keep it going and even lock the wand trigger so it will keep on running. Maybe we should sell it to someone else for parts because it takes 6 to 8 months to get parts from our dealer."

John Tominac, Goetzville, Mich.: "Our best buy ever is our 1981 Long 610 4-WD tractor. It's been a dependable tractor with no downtime. The only things I've replaced are the front tires and battery."

Jim Zoucha, Orchard, Neb.: A Safe T Katch calf catcher rates as Jim's "best buy" (Box 176, Orchard, Neb. 68764 ph 800 846-5157). "We had a big problem with calf scours a couple years ago and the calf catcher made it easy to start treating calves. The calves we saved paid for it many times over. It's especially handy for tagging new calves without getting the calf's mother too mad."

On the minus side, "My Owatonna 285 self-propelled windrower is my worst buy. A bunch of chimpanzees could have designed and built a better machine, and the company provided absolutely no help. The problems included out-of-square construction and high prices for parts. I finally rebuilt and cross-referenced most of the parts

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that I needed to solve many of the problems. I finally parked it and bought a very good windrower - a New Holland 116.

"My air compressor and pressure washer hoses never seem to get picked up after use, so I bought a hose reel made by Reel Quick, of Orchard, Neb. It makes it easy to store hoses so that they don't get kinks in them or get run over."

Gerald Williams, Duncombe, Iowa: Gerald bought a used 1982 Honda 200 3-wheel ATV two years ago and says it's his "best buy". "It's handy for riding out to the fields and can straddle 30-in. rows when the crops are small.

"I'm well pleased with my 1990 Deere 4555 tractor. It has a lot of power and is easy on fuel."

Al Otting, Earlville, Iowa: "My best buy is Mycogen corn borer resistant seed corn. It really stood up to corn borers last summer. I could see right to the row where it was planted.

"My Pax hog feeder is made cheap. It's a worst buy. It feeds out either too much or not at all. I had to rebuild the entire inside of the feeder."

Clair Moore, Dolliver, Iowa: "My best buy of all time is my 1965 Oliver 1650 diesel tractor. I've never had the oil pan off because I don't change oil on this tractor. It has a 3-roll toilet paper filter that I change

every 75 hours. It has about 5,300 hours on it."

Greg Hoeing, Glenwood, Ind.: A 1994 Deere 6200 tractor equipped with a 620 loader rates as Greg's "best buy". "It's the most versatile tractor I've ever driven. It's small enough to get in and out of barns but powerful enough that it can handle tough chores. I use it every day to move round bales. It takes only about 10 seconds to change the quick-tach bucket. It also has a lot of power for its size. I normally use a 100 hp tractor to operate my round baler, which is supposed to require at least an 85 hp tractor. When the 100 hp tractor broke down recently I replaced it with my 66 hp 6200 and it had more than enough power to do the job.

"My 1991 Claas Contour 3.80 rotary rake is my worst buy. It does a fabulous job raking hay but after only two years of use it started to fall apart. The bearings on the center camshaft went out for a total repair bill of \$800. Then the frame started to break so that the curtain fell onto the arms. That repair cost \$250. A year later the bearings went out again, taking the camshaft with them. I replaced it with a Kuhn and so far I like it."

Jean I. Nichols, Wallingford, Vt.: "My best buy ever is my 1953 Farmall Super H equipped with live hydraulics. I'm the second owner and use it all year long. I use it to plow and harrow in the spring, mow hay in the summer, saw wood in the fall, and plow snow in the winter. I use a No. 31 McCormick loader to do all my loader work. The tractor always starts no matter how cold it gets."

Lester Schlenker, Cherry Valley, Ark.: Lester nominates his Deere CTS combine equipped with a rotor as "best buy". "It has a lot of capacity and will take care of a large acreage.

"My Brent 772 grain cart is equipped with big wheels, allowing it to haul large loads without leaving any wheel ruts."

Jon Holmes, Graham, Mo.: "My 1994 Ford 8240 tractor equipped with front wheel assist is a best buy. It's well built and is easy on fuel."

George Spillmann, Kyle, Texas: "I like my 1985 Clark forklift which has a 6,000-lb. capacity and air tires. It lets me put bulk items on a pallet at the point of purchase, then unload them with ease. It also works great for moving equipment around without having to hook up to a tractor. I even use it to move grain wagons. It makes a great portable stepladder and is a terrific jack for changing tires on implements and vehicles. However, it can't be used on soft dirt or mud.

"My worst buy is a grain pan made by Abilene Machine (Solomon, Kan.) that I mounted on my Massey Ferguson 860 combine. Some mounting holes in the pan were misaligned and the braces were placed incorrectly. I had to redrill and ream out the holes. I also had to cut the support welds and move the pan to keep it from knocking against the combine frame. Also, some spot welding came loose and I had to use pop rivets to attach it securely."

Stanley M. Maxwell, Ferriday, La.: "The hydraulic brakes and the steering could be better, and I wish it had positive traction," says Stanley, who otherwise is

pleased with his 1983 Heald Hauler.

Chadwick Owen, Livermore, Kent.: "My best buy is my Noma riding mower equipped with a 43-in. mulching-type deck. It's well built and the 18 hp, 2-cyl. Briggs & Stratton engine has power to spare."

Alvin Farney, Roanoke, Ill.: A used 1988 Chevrolet 1500 pickup equipped with a V-6, 4.3-liter engine and a 2-73 rear end is Alvin's "best buy". "It runs quiet and is fuel efficient and has 112,000 miles with no repairs. The heater and radio controls leave a lot to be desired. Otherwise it's a great pickup."

Billy Reed Clements, Lockport, Kent.: Billy's impressed with his 1995 Yamaha Timberwolf 4-wheeler ATV. "It steers, rides, and runs great. I use it for everything from joy riding to working cattle."

"The heater and radio controls leave a lot to be desired. Otherwise it's a great pickup."

L.L. Birkenholz, Des Moines, Iowa: He's pleased with his 1993 Dodge Ram 150 pickup equipped with a 318 cu. in. engine. "It really gets up and goes - fuel injection sure makes a difference. It's also fuel efficient and handles and rides good. I love it."

William Callihan, Humphreys, Mo.: "My Honda 300 4-WD ATV is the most dependable piece of equipment I've owned in 40 years of farming. I've used it to feed sows and pigs, check cows, spot spray brush and weeds, and to do a lot of other chores over the past six years with no problems.

"I'm well satisfied with my 1993 Deere 6400 MFWD tractor equipped with a Westendorf loader."

Paul W. Price, Goldston, N.C.: Paul's the satisfied owner of a 1993 Ford 8630 tractor. "It has plenty of power for the toughest logging conditions, and the 18-speed powershift transmission lets me immediately shift into the proper gear with the flip of the shifter. It eliminates the need to clutch except when starting or stopping. It's never at a loss for power which lets me keep moving in tough conditions and speed up as soon as I break out of those conditions."

Berlyn Teig, Montgomery, Minn.: "My best buy is the FARM SHOW video that I recently purchased. I've used the ideas shown to build things. For example, I converted a combine into a loader. My grandchildren also enjoy watching the video."

Robert M. Hastings, Jr., Mesa, Ariz.: Robert nominates his 1994 GM 3/4-ton 4-WD Supercab pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter diesel engine as his "best buy". "It has 117,000 miles and all I've done is change the oil and fuel filters. It has started at a temperature of 37 degrees below zero in Minot, N. Dak., and has also spent time in 118 degree temperatures in Phoenix, Ariz. No problems."

Warren Wing, Newkirk, Okla.: "My worst buy is my Deere 4230 tractor. It worked alright for light work such as baling, swathing, planting, etc., but used a lot of fuel even on light loads. The dealer's mechanic got it up to 100 hp, barely, but it still wouldn't pull my 4-bottom plow. It always ran hot and the 3-pt. hydraulics never worked right. Also, it ate up a lot of fuel. Deere really goofed when they replaced the 4020 with this model."

Carl F. Butler, Mesick, Mich.: Carl likes his Ford 1920 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 12-speed transmission. "It's very agile and has a lot of power."

Fred Conkling, Portland, Ind.: Fred likes Flex-Step horseshoes (Flex-Step Co., Inc., Union City, Mich.). "One of the mules that we show in parades always seemed to go lame whenever we had a parade. We tried using different pads with metal shoes which helped somewhat. Then I found out about Flex-step shoes. They're the nearest thing to sound feet that we've found. They out-wear metal shoes and don't slip as much on pavement. They also work great on saddle horses."

Forrest A. Barnes, Rigby, Idaho: "It cuts hay fast," says Forrest about his 1995 Husson 1340 rotary mower-conditioner. "Makes harvesting my crop more timely and pleasurable."

Lynn Eckel, Glenwood, Iowa: A 1993 Yamaha 400cc ATV heads Lynn's "best buy" list. "I use it all the time in all weather conditions. It has unbelievable power and traction. I mounted a blade on it for pushing snow. It works so well that I've stopped using my tractor to push snow. I use it to pull my Mill Creek 25-bu. manure spreader which is also a best buy (Emel Pruismann, 939 Edwards, Jewell, Iowa 50130). It's built with all-steel construction and has tractor-type drive tires that allow it to go right through mud and snow.

"My 1995 Ford 3/4-ton turbocharged diesel pickup will outpull a Dodge pickup equipped with a Cummins engine. It never gets less than 16 mpg with a loaded goose-neck flatbed or livestock trailer, and it gets 22 to 25 mpg on the highway empty.

"Another best buy is FARM SHOW. It's the only magazine I subscribe to that's hard to put down once I start reading it. It has a lot of good ideas and many of them are so simple that anyone can make them."

Dan Smith, Northport, Wash.: "It's easy to use, trouble-free, and makes strong, clean welds," says Dan about his 1993 Lincoln 130 SP MIG welder.

"I also like my 1993 Du-Ail backhoe. It's trouble-free and works great for digging trenches around our ranch. We mount it on our Ford 2120 tractor."

Tom Broughton, Loganville, Wis.: "It has tremendous capacity and is easy on fuel," says Tom, pleased with his Deere 3960 chopper which he bought used. "Even when we put two windrows together the machine is still hungry. It has reduced our chopping time by half or more.

"My Stihl chain saw is a best buy. It's still going strong after 18 years. I've used it to cut 14 cords of wood a year to heat our house, as well as to cut lumber and pulp."

Tom Tate, Sublimity, Ore.: "My 1980 Bush Hog heavy duty 15-ft. tandem disk does a good job of penetrating our heavy grass seed sod due to the weight on each disc blade. It does as good a job as an offset disk, and by swinging the gangs backward I can reduce the angle of the blades so I can use it to do finish work. It's well built.

"My 1987 Chevrolet S-10 4-WD pickup, which I bought used with all the 'bells and whistles', is my worst buy. The V-6 engine is hard on fuel, and reverse gear on the automatic transmission failed immediately. The transfer case leaks as does the transmission. I've had nothing but trouble with the gauges - the oil pressure sensor has been replaced three times and now it's out again. Also, the transfer case shift has broken the gear shift linkage twice."