

# Best & Worst Buys

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10 mpg in the winter and 10 to 11 mpg in the summer. So much for technology!"

**Steven M. Busta, Lawler, Iowa:** "I like my **Stihl** 026 chain saw. It runs well and has never been back to the dealer except to replace the bar and chain.

"I traded it in for a **Homelite** 330 chain saw which is a real lemon. It would rarely burn more than two tanks of fuel without breaking down."

**Dennis Poulsen, Snowville, Utah:** "We've had tremendous problems with our D-2000 Ford-New Holland big square baler and we haven't been able to get any satisfaction from the company," says Dennis. "I'm a commercial hay producer and the reason we bought this baler was because it makes smaller 3 by 4 by 8-ft. bales that weigh about 1,300 lbs., which lets you get more bales on the same amount of semi trailer space. The problem is that the baler has never worked right from the beginning. I can't get enough weight into the bales and it's supposed to tie with 5 strings but we're lucky if we get 4 and it's usually 3. Hay buyers aren't too impressed when they look at your bales and a third of them are broken apart.

"This is the second D-2000 I've had. Ford-New Holland replaced the first one but now they won't do anything. I know personally of one commercial grower who turned two of these balers back over to Ford and I've heard of others. This baler is no longer in production. I've been a long-term

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Ford customer - pickups, tractors, and a lot of other equipment. I didn't think I'd have a problem with the company but I'm very disappointed with this situation. This baler doesn't work and I think the company knows it. But they won't help."

**James E. Evans, Scotland, Ark.:** James is impressed with his 1995 **Deere** 660 rototiller. "It has replaceable parts and the grease fittings are easily accessible. It operates smooth and aerates the soil well while digging 8 in. deep. I had great-looking vegetables in my garden this year."

**John R. Clouser, Wolsey, S. Dak.:** "I've used Deere tractors ever since I started farming in 1947, but now I'm considering switching to another brand. I've had seal problems with my **Deere** 4450 MFWD tractor ever since I bought it. At 5,000 hours the front main seal started leaking. One week after it was repaired the rear main seal started leaking oil into the hydraulic system. I had it repaired but the company wouldn't help pay for it. I don't believe the seals should go bad at only 5,000 hours. Nothing I did caused the seals to leak."

**F.A. Schroeder, Grayville, Ill.:** "I like my 1993 **Agco-Allis** 6690 front wheel assist tractor. The air-cooled engine has a lot of power and is fuel efficient. The tractor

handles nice and the front wheel assist works great. I also like the pto options for spraying and mowing."

**Gerald Hiebert, Blue Sky, Alberta:** "I'm pleased with my 1990 **Chevrolet** 1/2-ton 4-WD pickup equipped with a 6.2-liter diesel engine. It has over 200,000 miles and is still going strong. I haven't done anything to the power train except to replace head gaskets due to an antifreeze leak when the pickup, was still under warranty."

**Dale Gilles, Plum City, Wis.:** "My 1991 **Gehl** 1310 fixed chamber round baler is my best buy. It may not work the best for baling leafy alfalfa where leaf loss may be a problem. However, I can use it to bale everything from wet silage bales to dry hay to straw to corn stalks with no problems. I've even used it to bale wet sorghum for green feed."

**Mark Hoesly, Ladysmith, Wis.:** Mark says a pair of **Pro-Quality** hay baskets that unload by gravity out the back, head his "best buy" list (Pro-Quality Corp., Box 6184, St. Cloud, Minn. 56302). "They work as advertised and are huge labor-savers. My dad and I put up over 12,000 hay bales for our cows each year, as well as straw bales. The baskets are less expensive and more reliable than a thrower and thrower racks.

"My **Ford** tractors are all best buys. I have a 1953 NAA, 1961 901, 1975 7000, 1977 7600, and 1980 4600. All are fuel efficient and reliable. The 7000 and 7600 never use more than 4 gal. of fuel per hour, and the clutch on the 7000 lasted over 8,000 hours."

**Chance Davis, Belle Fourche, S. Dak.:** Chance owns a 1995 **Dodge** Ram 2500 4-WD pickup with a V-8 360 cu. in. engine. "I'm very impressed with it. It rides well, has a lot of power, is fairly fuel efficient, and is well-built. It has a great cab with a lot of room for people and tool storage. After eight months of rough pasture use the doors still shut like new."

**Donald Klock, Fort Plain, N.Y.:** Donald's had good luck with his **International** 966 and 1466 tractors, both purchased used. "They're reliable tractors and just keep on going. Parts are readily available and they're relatively easy to repair. The brakes, hydraulic pump, and pto clutch are easy to get at and repair.

"My worst buy is my **Homelite** 245 chain saw. It was in the shop more than in the woods. The rewind starter went bad and plastic lines to the carburetor and fuel pump failed. A part on the starter came loose and tore a hole in the oil tank.

"My **Allis Chalmers** 185 tractor is the worst piece of junk I've ever owned. It has a rubber transmission, the pto is worn, and the brakes are a joke. Also, under load the exhaust puts out so much smoke you'd think you were burning coal."

**Jim Eller, Sun River, Mt.:** A used **Deere** 4050 tractor equipped with a 158 loader and grapple fork is Jim's "best buy." "It's as reliable and efficient as a 4020 but with less noise. The quad range isn't as efficient as the powershift transmission, but it's dependable. The tractor is easy to work on and the turbocharged engine has a lot of power and starts well in cold weather. The cab is quiet and well designed with easy-to-operate controls."

On the negative side, Jim lists his 1995 **Case-IH** 1594 front wheel assist tractor equipped with a Case-IH loader. "From the first day we had trouble with the hydraulics, and the tractor is an absolute pain to service. The cab is designed poorly - controls are hard to get at. It doesn't start reliably in cold weather even though it's in the shed and plugged in 24 hours a day. However, it is fuel efficient and I like the front wheel assist. Dealer and company support has been marginal."

**Duaine C. Trecek, Agenda, Kan.:** "My 1987 **Deutz Allis** 7110 110 hp tractor is my worst buy. It has a beautiful engine and I like the transmission, but it's got problems. Everything went fine until 1,805 hours when a pto coupling broke. At 1,920 hours the cross in the spider gears in the rear end broke and it cost \$3,200 to repair. The factory wouldn't help pay for the repair. At 3,000 hours the same part broke again, breaking the transmission shaft, too. It cost \$6,800 to repair. At 3,750 hours the part broke again and the rear end housing also broke. The estimated repair cost is \$12,000, but I won't fix this piece of junk again. I take care of my tractors so it still looks like new, but it's not running."

**Doug Clark, Goderich, Ontario:** Doug's had problems with his 1993 **Vicon** RP1211 C round baler. "The baler was designed well but built poor. When I got it, the hydraulic cylinders leaked, bearings were missing, the main floor roller fell apart after making only 150 bales, and there was no cut-off knife for the net wrapping. I redesigned some parts and rebuilt the baler from end to end and now it works well (up to 40 bales per hour using net wrap). However, I'll never buy anything from the company again."

**Oliver G. Brown, Palmyra, N.Y.:** Faced with the job of cutting weeds twice a year in 50 acres of Christmas trees, Oliver bought a **Troy Built** sicklebar mower. "It's my best buy. No downtime and it's easy to maintain. My only cost has been for knives and sicklebar maintenance. I bought my first Troy Built mower in 1981 and now have three more, two of them bought used. I like all of them."

**T. McDonald, Arpin, Ontario:** He's happy with his 1987 **Kawasaki** Bayou 300 2-WD ATV. "I'm well satisfied with it considering how hard I use it. It just keeps on going with only regular maintenance. The controls should be moved off the handlebars because with a lot of handlebar movement the wires tend to break. I use it mostly to check on cattle on pasture and to move small equipment trailers into and out of sheds. The differential can be locked or unlocked which is often useful. It's nice when driving on lawns, too - no ripping and tearing of the grass. I like the automatic clutch for checking on electric fences - I can make quick stops and starts to see if the wire is 'hot'. A 4-WD model might have some advantages, but I like 2-WD better. It's 100% more maneuverable than 4-WD under most conditions."

**Eugene Leighty, Kendallville, Ind.:** "My 1983 **Echo** gas trimmer is a best buy. I bought it 15 years ago and use it a lot in the fall to trim about 2 miles of roadside. I have the string attachment, a heavy weed blade, and a saw blade. I use the saw blade a lot to cut brush along the road. I've never had any trouble with it."

**Roger Kirby, Lamont, Okla.:** "It really eats hay and has been virtually trouble-free," says Roger about his 1991 **Case-IH** 8580 big square baler. "I bought it used

after it had already made 20,000 bales. I also like the big baler seminars put on by the **Maize Corp.**, Maize, Kan. They also do service work on big balers. I can call them at 11 o'clock at night and get help."

**Grant Hanson, Glenwood, Minn.:** Grant's had problems with a rebuilt long block engine he bought from **Four Star Engines and Parts**, Hutchinson, Kan., in May, 1994. "I had to replace the engine in my 1987 Dodge Caravan and my dealer chose to use a long block engine. The company's 'Our goal is 100% customer satisfaction' slogan sounded good, and the engine came with a 12-month, 12,000-mile warranty. However, after installation the engine burned over a gallon of oil between changes. The problem was reported well within the warranty's time and mileage restrictions but the company refused to pay for anything. The fine print in the warranty

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says they don't have to. The engine smoked so bad I couldn't legally drive the Caravan. I had to have another engine installed at my own expense."

**Marvel Erion, Alta Vista, Iowa:** "My 1995 **Case-IH** 950 22-in. row planter places seed accurately and at an even depth. It's truly an 'Early Riser'. Seed comes up fast.

"I've had numerous problems with the powershift transmission on my 1992 **Case-IH** 5140 tractor. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. The electronics on it have problems. Things have only been partially fixed."

**Mark Porter, Oregon, Wis.:** Mark's had good luck with the 1995 **Schaffert Mfg.** furrow "V" closers mounted on his White 5100 planter (Schaffert Mfg. Co., Rt. 1, Box 157, Indianola, Neb. 69034). "In the past I had problems making sure the seed furrow was closed properly, particularly in wet conditions. I was especially concerned this year because I tried no-till on 20 acres. However, the furrow closers worked as advertised. The seed trenches were well filled and packed - a perfect combination. I highly recommend them.

"I also like my 1991 **Chevrolet** Geo Metro. It gets over 50 mpg and is reliable and cheap. It also fits in back of my truck."

**Alvin Beechy, LaGrange, Ind.:** "We've used our **Planear** wagon running gear a lot since we bought it in 1983 without any problems. We're well satisfied with it."

**Carl Stamm, Kalamazoo, Mich.:** Carl likes his **Campbell-Hausfield** airless paint sprayer. "It did a nice job on our old barns and sheds. It's easy to use, has great pressure, and does a good job of applying even layers of paint."

**Kenneth Fricke, Corder, Mo.:** "I like my 1971 **Deere** 4520 tractor with a powershift transmission. I bought it used and it still works great.

"My worst buy 1993 **Case-IH** 4200 15-ft. Combo-Mulch finisher won't create an even seedbed. The discs on front bring corn stalks toward the center and pile them there in a ridge which the cultivator in back can't level out. The dealer has tried to fix the problem with no luck. Company representatives admit all 15-ft. models have this problem but won't do anything about it."