

# Best & Worst Buys

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**Hydro-Tech** silage preservative is my worst buy. It's designed to be sprayed onto silage and eliminate the need to cover bunker silos with plastic. It's supposed to swell up and shed water, but with all the rain and snow we had, the top 12 to 15 in. of silage in our bunker silo and 12 to 15 in. along the walls was ruined. It was nice not having to bother with tires and plastic, but it wasted too much silage."

**Jeff Houser, Aztec, N.M.:** "Our 1991 **New Holland** 144 ground-driven hay inverter is one of our best buys ever. It cuts hay drying time almost in half without any noticeable damage to alfalfa leaves. Also, if mowed hay gets rained on it'll speed drying time without damaging the hay. We're well pleased with it."

**Gerald Grant, Nevada, Iowa:** Gerald's impressed with his 1991 **Deere** 875 12-row, 30-in. high residue row crop cultivator. "It's well built and can handle a lot of trash and stays in the ground regardless of how hard the ground is. We're pretty much Case-IH customers. We bought this cultivator because our local Case-IH dealer couldn't get a cultivator that we had ordered seven months earlier and we needed it. We couldn't be happier with it."

**Sears Craftsman** electric-powered shop tools have lost some of their quality. For example, on drills the chucks slip and won't hold bits, switches fail, and the motors burn out. We've started buying **Makita** electric hand tools."

**David Keith, Rockford, Iowa:** "My 1990 **Dixon** 428 ZTR mower does a good job of mowing, is easy to operate, and has cut mowing time by more than 50%. Problems have been few and minor and were promptly taken care of by our dealer."

"My 12-year-old **Astro II** machine shed is my worst buy. Ever since it was built it has leaked whenever it rains, and snow blows into it during the winter. I wish I had bought a Morton building instead."

**Wayne Manthey, Big Bend, Wis.:** Wayne likes his 1987 **Ford** F-350 4-WD diesel pickup. "I bought it used in 1989 with 32,000 miles. It now has 169,000 miles with only minor repairs. It still looks good and gets 15 to 20 mpg. It's the best truck I've ever owned."

"Our 1993 **Great Plains** 10-ft. no-till drill pulls and handles much easier than I expected. The seed metering system is accurate and adjustments are simple to make."

**Dean Kinzer, Pullman, Wash.:** "I'm well pleased with my 1978 **Caterpillar** D6-C with 28-in. pads. It's the only tractor that can stay on our steep hills. However, I wish it had a Cat 3406 engine instead of the 3306. And the steering clutch linkage bearings used to get dirt in them and seize up at least once a year. I drilled out the bearing cages and inserted grease zerks in them. I grease them about once a week which has solved the problem. I mounted an aftercooler on the engine to increase power and extend engine life. It helped but the engine still needs more power."

**John Meders, Chowchilla, Calif.:** "It's a good tractor but it needs a bigger hydraulic pump," says John about his **Kubota** MD4500 DT.

**Thomas Schmidl, Live Oak, Calif.:** Thomas likes his **Ford** 7600 and 6610 trac-

tors. "I buy Ford tractors because they don't have any repair bills. That saves me a lot of money."

**Pete Lamp, Kendallville, Ind.:** Pete has 20,000 miles on his 1992 **Ford** F-150 4-WD pickup equipped with a 4-speed transmission and 300 cu. in. 6-cyl. engine. "I'm well pleased with it. Last winter we had a spell of 20 below zero weather but it never failed to start. It's had only a couple of minor problems which were promptly handled by my dealer."

**Jeff Orns, El Paso, Ill.:** A used 1988 **GM** K3500 pickup purchased in 1993 rates as Jeff's "worst buy." "At 48,000 miles a constant velocity joint on one side of the 4-WD drive shaft fell apart. The replacement part cost \$444. I installed it myself. One week later the constant velocity joint on the other side of the shaft went out, costing another \$444. The constant velocity joints are supposed to be covered by the vehicle's 6-year, 60,000-mile warranty but the company wouldn't pay for them."

**Kenneth Malcolm, Galesburg, Ill.:** "Our best buy is a 1982 **Oldsmobile** 98 diesel car which has 188,000 miles. The engine is original and still runs good. It's very de-

**"I called the company several times to complain, but they never showed any interest in correcting the problems."**

pendable. Good mileage and low maintenance."

"Our worst buy is a **Wick** 60 by 72-ft. building. The roof leaks so bad that in one place you can see right through it. It also has crooked sidewalls. I called the company several times to complain, but they never showed any interest in correcting the problems."

**Alex Burk, Port Hope, Mich.:** Alex likes his 1983 **Dodge** Ram W150 truck equipped with a V-8 engine. "I use it a lot to haul silage wagons from our fields. It requires minimal maintenance and has 38,000 miles with hardly any rust."

**Warren E. Zakopyko, Balfour, N. Dak.:** "My 1964 **International** 806 has over 16,000 hours and I've had to replace only two clutches and a torque converter. I haven't done anything to the engine except to change the oil and filter every 100 hours."

**David Wurst, Osceola, Wis.:** "My 1993 **Smart Feeder** M600 computerized track feeder designed for free stall dairy barns is a best buy. It has reduced my labor, feed costs, and veterinarian's bill and greatly improved my dairy herd's production. My last DHI milk test showed that 30% of my cows now produce more than 100 lbs. per day. It's made of stainless steel and has a reliable, easy-to-use mini-computer. It cost less than a TMR feeder and is a flexible system that lets me feed cows individually for maximum profit."

"My **Deutz** 9150 4-WD tractor has a dynameter rating of 153 hp but works like a 180 hp tractor and burns only as much fuel

as a 100 hp tractor. The **Deutz** air-cooled engine has outstanding lugging ability and can take constant abuse without overheating. As hardworking and tough as this 374 cu. in. engine is, the 585 cu. in. engine in the company's 9170 and 9190 tractors must be phenomenal. We have a total of about 22,000 hours on **Deutz** engines and they've never let us down."

**George Cook, Jr., Rayland, Ohio:** "My 1980 **International** 584D has been a good row crop tractor and has 1,826 hours on it. It'll easily pull a 3-bottom plow, is easy on fuel, and starts good in cold weather. The only problem was a broken emergency brake cable. Also, I recently lost the oil dipstick while I was disking and a new one cost \$29.22. Only a captive market could command this type of price."

**Battista Gianino, Boyes, Mont.:** Battista likes his 1979 **International** 686 diesel tractor. "It has 4,800 hours and has been a good tractor other than a minor shifting problem. The shifting lever should be mounted on the floor. Also, the torque amplifier and clutch setup should be easier to adjust. The engine works good. I added a 16-in. wheel and bearing in front straight out from the frame. It works great for unrolling round bales. I plan to add hydraulic or electric power to it. It works better than rear-mounted bale unrollers."

**James Wilson, Orland, Calif.:** "My best buy is my 1989 **Deere** 9600 combine. I use it to harvest clover seed which it threshes cleanly. It has a lot of capacity and comfort and easy accessibility. I really like it. My only complaint is that half the parts on it are metric and the other half go by U.S. standards. You'd think **Deere** would tell its customers where they're at."

**Kenneth F. Harmon, Issaquah, Wash.:** A 1993 **Dodge** 250 pickup equipped with a Cummins turbocharged diesel engine rates as Kenneth's "best buy." "It has plenty of power to pull my trailer and tractor and gets up to 24 mpg. The air conditioner leaked but the dealer promptly took care of it. It's a well-made, heavy-duty truck."

**George Janeczek, Washington, Iowa:** "My best buy is a 1993 **Chevrolet** 2500 4-WD extended cab pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter turbocharged diesel engine. It has 24,000 miles with no problems. I've never driven a pickup with so much power and fuel economy. I get 11 to 12 mpg pulling a trailer, 15 to 16 mpg on short trips, and 20 or more mpg on the highway. I love it. I previously had a 1991 **Ford** pickup equipped with a 351 cu. in. engine. The engine was the only thing that was problem-free. It had no power and I was lucky to get past a filling station without having to refuel."

**Betty Williams, Terral, Okla.:** "My worst buy is a 36-in. **Maytag** gas cooking range. Four of the five top burners have been replaced and it has gone through four thermostats. Right now I have a roast in the oven and I'm worried whether we'll have 'burnt offerings' or very rare meat for lunch. Only half of the top light has ever worked and I have a hard time keeping the light inside the oven working. I wish a lonely **Maytag** repairman would fix it."

**Don Bromley, Brandon, Manitoba:** "It has a lot of power and is easy on fuel," says Don, pleased with his 1990 **Case-IH** 2096 tractor. "The cab is quiet and has good visibility, and the steering is light and responsive."

"My 1989 **Ford** F-800 truck equipped with a 429 cu. in. gas engine is my worst buy. The engine is hard on fuel and lacks power, and it's hard to shift into second

gear. After I spent two years complaining to **Ford**, their last words were, 'It's the nature of the beast so live with it.'"

**Charles W. Harless, Waco, Texas:** "I'm well pleased with my 1990 **Deere** 4450 tractor. No problems."

**Lawrence Erlenbusch, Angela, Mont.:** "My **Deere** 95 combine, which I bought used, is my best buy because it's easy to service and operate. However, it's turning into my worst buy because **Deere** no longer makes parts for it."

**James E. Duermeier, Pulaski, Tenn.:** "Thirteen years ago I bought an **Echo** 452VL 16-in. chain saw. It has been a real workhorse. It even survived being run over by a bulldozer. The only parts (other than chains) that have had to be replaced were a plastic gas line and a gas filter."

"I'm also impressed with my **CattlePro** beef cattle records, management and performance analysis software (**Bowman Farm Systems, Inc., Rt. 5, Box 25, Cynthia, Kent, 41031**). It's a great way for beef cattle producers to keep comprehensive records. The computer program is easy to use and covers every type of record that a cowman needs for a successful operation, such as weights and measures, herd inventories, sires, dams, progeny, cow doctoring, pelvic measurements, etc. You decide what records to keep. The bottom line is that **Cattle Pro** can track a snake across a flat rock. I really like it."

**Lloyd Rosborough, Harvey Station, N.B.:** "My worst buy is a **Case-IH** 485 tractor. It has 1,600 hours on it. I've installed two new clutches."

**Lee Downing, Beaverdam, Va.:** Lee's happy with his **Vicon** 510 16-ft. tedder. "It does an excellent job of fluffing hay, even alfalfa, and is easy to fold up for transport."

"My **Vicon** 321 10 1/2-ft. disc mower-conditioner is an amazing machine. It'll cut anything and I can operate it as fast as I want. I cut about 10 acres per hour and not all of my fields are large. I'll never buy another brand."

"My **Case-IH** 3450 round baler is a worst buy but not because it has mechanical problems. I've made more than 1,000 bales with it and never had a minute of trouble. The problem is that it makes a 4-ft. wide, 5-ft. long soft center bale and after the soft center has been formed, it doesn't wrap enough hay around it to hold the bale together very well. It might work alright if the entire bale was wrapped with plastic."

**D.D. Montgomery, Fair Play, Mo.:** "My 1992 **Sears Craftsman** 8 hp 30-in. riding mower is my worst buy. The first time I used it I didn't have any problems. The second time I used it, the bagging equipment kept plugging up. I finally had to remove the bagger. It continued to plug up but not as often. The deck cracked at the discharge port and I had to weld it back together. It uses gas like a 20 hp engine but only has the power of a 5 hp. The drive belt and steering apparatus broke."

**Joe Durma, Schoharie, N.Y.:** Joe's "best buy" is **Fielder's Choice** Seed Corn (**Box 898, Monticello, Ind. 47960** ph 800 321-3177). "I planted it last year for the first time and used an 80-day variety. It yielded every bit as well as more expensive varieties. It stood good and had large ears with small cobs, and at harvest it threshed easily and cleanly. Best of all, at \$44 a bag it costs only about half as much as the 'elite hybrids'."