

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers "tell it like it is" in nominating their "best" and "worst" buys.

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Ed Staudt, Vibank, Sask.: Ed's had trouble with his Belarus Don 1500 combine. "It should have been painted lemon yellow. After it arrived, the company had to bring out three sets of sieves, both top and bottom, before we found a set that was close to acceptable. Other problems included leaking hydraulic hoses and hydraulic block assemblies, and an erratic fuel gauge. Some monitors didn't work, while others wouldn't shut off, setting off an ear-splitting alarm in the cab. We couldn't raise the header because of a stuck solenoid and the unloading auger wouldn't swing out.

"After dealer and factory technicians made many trips to our farm, the combine was supposed to be field ready. However, it never worked properly. The alarm would sound, even when the combine wasn't running. The unloading auger would swing out and start unloading grain for no reason while we were driving. Sometimes the radio would work, sometimes the air conditioner would work, sometimes the hydraulics would work, but never did everything work together for more than a 7-hour shift without a breakdown of some kind.

"Other problems included tailing sieves falling out, the turbo charger going up in smoke, and the unloading auger burning up

lots of power and gets excellent mileage on long trips - about 25 mpg on the highway and 20 to 21 mpg around town. It rides like a car and is nice and quiet. Starts right up even in the coldest weather.

"My 1989 Kubota M6950 DT tractor isn't really a worst buy because it does everything we want it to and starts good in winter. However, parts for it are expensive. For example, a simple work light switch sells for \$73. Another problem is that it's hard to service. You need the fingers of a newborn baby to work in some of the cramped spaces.

"My Deere 530 and 535 round balers have both been best buys. I made 15,000 bales with the 530 before I traded it in for the 535 and I made 17,000 bales with it before trading for a new 535 equipped with net wrap. We'll see how well the new one works. I do some custom baling and a lot of people ask for these balers. They make tight bales that do a good job of shedding water. Net wrap should help even more."

James Greer, Gorrie, Ontario: James's 1992 Case-IH 8520 in-line square baler heads his "best buy" list. "I've used it to make over 40,000 bales with little downtime. It can make up to 400 bales per hour with minimum leaf loss because it has a low pickup height and because hay doesn't get handled as much before being tied because there's no cross auger. It makes firm, square bales that truckers really like.

"Two years ago I bought a Harco 45-ft. bale elevator. It's well-built and should last a long time. My only complaint is that it's too heavy to be easily moved around. To solve the problem I had a friend mount a wheel under the front of it."

Barry Denison, Metcalfe, Ontario: "My New Idea 483 round baler is a best buy. We've made more than 8,000 bales with it and the only thing we've replaced is a V-belt on the pickup. For the price we paid it's a hard baler to beat.

"My 1989 Deere 111 riding mower ran great the first year until the warranty expired. Then the engine went bad and the company wouldn't do anything about it. I went through two engines in three years before I traded it off."

Jordan Scott, Neponset, Ill.: "It's a tough, powerful pickup that's well-suited for farm use," reports Jordan, pleased with his 1991 Dodge Power Ram W250 4-WD with a Cummins turbocharged diesel engine. "It has a lot of power and pulls like a tractor. However, the overload springs make the ride a little rough. Also, the rear tires wear out fast. Otherwise we're well pleased with it."

Robert Ullom, Flandreau, S. Dak.: Robert's pleased with his 1993 White 6100 12-row no-till planter. "It does an excellent job planting both corn and soybeans. We planted in some pretty wet ground last year but didn't plug up once and we ended up with uniform, even stands. We did have some trouble with fertilizer hanging up in the rubber tubes on the Yetter single disc fertilizer openers we mounted on the planter. We solved the problem by changing to shorter tubes. Also, the Yetter openers plugged up with trash no matter how we set them. I talked to the company and was told that the coulters should have been equipped with cleaning knives. We'll try them again this year with the knives."

L.W. Pinkerton, Milton, Kan.: A 1984 GM Sierra Suburban equipped with a 6.2-liter diesel engine and automatic transmission with overdrive rates as his "best buy". "It's roomy enough for the family and all

belts. Belarus technicians found that five of the six fuel injectors were faulty and they replaced a number of hydraulic valves because of faulty O-rings or fittings. A weld on the shaker arm that oscillates the cleaning mechanism broke, causing idler arms to break off. Brazing fell off the injector tubes in the engine compartment with great frequency. One time, when the brakes seized, we had to back up for a while until they let go and we could drive forward again.

"We finally got the company to take the combine back and reimburse some of our money (they expected us to pay for the hours we put on the combine, although most of those hours were spent driving to the shop to repair or weld something). We wouldn't buy another Belarus."

Ralph McLaughlin, Blackstock, Ontario: Ralph nominates his 1993 Yamaha Big Bear 4-WD ATV as his "best buy". "I use it to tow a large trailer. Performs well in all weather and soil conditions and always starts. I'd recommend Yamaha to anyone in the market for an ATV."

Bob Anderson, Ballinafad, Ontario: Bob's pleased with his Massey-Ferguson 135 tractor equipped with a Perkins 3-cyl. gas engine but says it could use one improvement. "The exhaust gaskets are a pain to replace. Other than that it's been trouble-free."

John Tibben, Kincardine, Ontario: John's the satisfied owner of a 1993 Chevrolet 3/4-ton 4-WD pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter turbocharged diesel engine. "It has