

Best & Worst Buys

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buy. In the first 29,000 miles the cruise control quit working, the seals on the rear axle leaked and had to be replaced, fuel injectors on the engine had to be replaced, the water pump had to be replaced, the power steering pump and fuel pump quit working, the brakes and lights needed work, and all four tires went bad. It uses so much fuel it would be cheaper to hire my trucking done. I spent more than \$600 for repair work not covered by warranty. If Ford wants to sell lemons they should get in the fruit business."

David J. Wiebke, Remsen, Iowa: David's "very satisfied" with his 1993 M & W 1400 riding mower. "It handles like a dream and doesn't leave any windrows. It

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has cut my mowing time from four hours to 1 1/2 hours. Our old Cub Cadet was the equivalent of a Ford Pinto, but our new M & W is the equivalent of a Lincoln Continental."

James Johnson, Glade Spring, Va.: "My Dustacator mineral feeder for cattle is a worst buy. It's built strong, but cows and calves don't get enough fly dust on. I've tried adjusting the height of the tub but it doesn't help."

Charline Stoppel, Wilson, Kan.: "We're disappointed with our Hale 16-ft. horse trailer. The front window won't stay shut, and we have to use a chain to keep the side door from opening accidentally. We also had to replace the floor after only one year."

Q.J. Koth, Hayward, Calif.: "Our 1993 Ford Explorer is our best buy. It's a 4-WD, 4-door model equipped with an automatic transmission and 6-cyl. engine. It really performs well."

Dan Chapman, Meriden, Iowa: "It takes the stress out of field work. Makes cultivating fun," says Dan about his "best buy" 1992 Wetherell automatic guidance system.

Larry Schniederjan, Dalhart, Texas: "My 1993 Harley-Davidson Electra-Glide Classic motorcycle is the most fun piece of farm machinery I own. I use it to go to town for parts and to travel long distances to farm shows. My wife loves the comfortable seat. It's the best stress reliever ever made. I can't wait for it to wear out so I can get another one."

Larry's disappointed with his 1992 Kawasaki KRX 250 motorcycle. "It's way too tall for an average size person. I'm 6 ft. tall but I'd have to be 7 ft. tall to straddle it flat-footed. Also, the stand is a joke. I have to constantly replace clutch levers and brake levers because the cycle falls over so much."

Allan Suchy, Osage, Iowa: "My Yetter 'residue manager' row cleaners clear 6 to 8-in. wide strips free of trash, resulting in much better seed emergence.

"I bought my 'worst buy' 1988 Ford F-250 pickup used with 20,000 miles. The 351 cu. in. fuel-injected engine didn't have enough power and got only 4 to 6 mpg. I

installed new computers and sensors but that didn't help. I called the company and a representative told me they had trouble with this engine between 1988 and 1991. They suggested I trade the pickup. I did and got a 1993 Chevrolet equipped with a 6.5-liter diesel engine. So far it has shown good power and gets 15 to 17 mpg pulling a 22-ft. trailer."

John R. Clouser, Wolsey, S. Dak.: John's pleased with his Stihl FS86 brush cutter. "This is my second Stihl model. I wore the first one out. Works great for trimming around fences and will cut everything from grass to small trees."

L.J. Balzer, Hooker, Okla.: He's had trouble with Pella windows. "They leak so that after every rain our floors are flooded. The mechanisms that open and close the windows wore out after being used only a few times. Apparently the worm drives are made from material that's too soft. After spending thousands of dollars for remodeling and then installing these windows, all we have is a mess. We don't recommend them to anyone."

Gene Janssen, Barnesville, Minn.: "Our 1993 Deere 7600 2-WD tractor equipped with a Power Quad transmission is our best buy. It has a quiet, roomy cab with convenient controls. The remote 3-pt. control switch outside the cab is handy and the transmission works great.

"Our 1984 Soil Mover 7-yard scraper is a worst buy. It's a good scraper, but the hydraulic cylinders are held together with snap rings that are pure junk and cost too much. I had a hydraulic repair service make new rings for one third the company price."

William Thomas, Pittsboro, N.C.: "It has a lot of lugging power for a 24 hp tractor," reports William, owner of a 1991 Deere 770 compact utility tractor. "Starts quickly in hot or cold weather and is fuel efficient. My only expenses have been for routine maintenance. It's the handiest tractor on our farm."

Gilbert Toney, Mooresboro, N.C.: A 1984 Pontiac Parisienne equipped with a 305 cu. in. engine rates as Gilbert's "best buy." "It's the best automobile I've ever had. It gets 25 mph on the road and has 63,000 trouble-free miles. It's still in showroom condition."

Paul Joubert, Milnor, N. Dak.: "At 108,000 miles, I'm pleased with my 1988 Dodge Dakota pickup."

Peter Lauska, Allegan, Mich.: "My 1993 Montgomery Ward Signature 2000 14 hp riding lawn mower has been trouble-free. I used it last summer to mow more than two acres twice a week. Starts great, cuts even, has plenty of power, and rides comfortably."

Larry B. Clark, Middlebury, Vt.: Larry likes his Craftsman 4 1/2-in. industrial grinder. "It's fast and powerful and has a wire cup brush that works great for cleaning rust and old paint. It does as good a job as a sand blaster but without the mess. It's a great addition to our shop."

Steve Perkinson, Thawville, Ill.: Steve mounted 1991 Martin row cleaners on his Deere 7200 16-row narrow planter and says they're a "best buy." "They do an excellent job of clearing strips in no-till conditions, especially corn stalks. However, on con-

ventionally tilled fields they gouge the soil because there's not enough upward adjustment. I plan to remount them so I can raise them up more."

Dennis Smith, Smithton, Penn.: Dennis is pleased with his 1984 Suzuki 185 Quad Runner ATV. "I've put over 9,000 miles on it and have never set the valves, adjusted the chain, or even looked at the brakes. It'll probably run forever. I usually install a new spark plug every year or two."

Orvis Byklum, Grygla, Minn.: "My 1974 Case 1175 tractor has over 3,000

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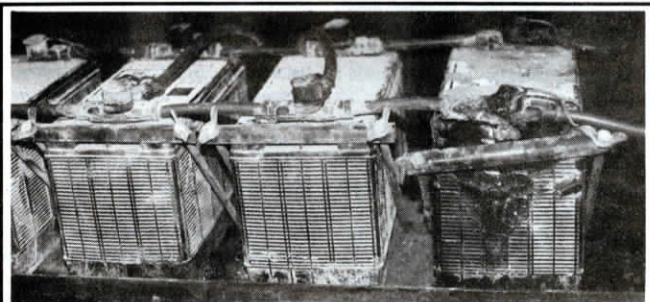
hours. I had to replace one throwout bearing at 300 hours. Since then it has required only routine maintenance.

"My worst buy is my New Holland 855 round baler. The main drive belt broke down

on the first bale because the idler pulley was put together wrong. After 100 bales, the auto-wrap gears were shot and the idler block broke. The dealer did a good job repairing it. But what will happen next?"

David Dougherty, Pylesville, Md.: David likes his four Sukup fans. "We air dry about 25,000 bu. of corn each year at a cost of less than 10 cents per bu. for electricity. Our Sukup fans work great and are really working well now that we've replaced the General Electric drip-proof 10 hp motors with totally enclosed motors. The company still won't admit that it needs enclosed motors on outdoor applications. The cost to us was about \$2,000. You couldn't give me a General Electric drip-proof motor."

Florian Steinlage, West Union, Iowa: "Our best buy lately has been our Deere 6400 tractor. We have over 500 hours on it and use it for everything. We thought we had the world by the tail with our '55' series and were worried that we wouldn't like these new tractors as well, but we really like them."



Editor's Note: We received a lot of response to last issue's "worst buy" report from Emily Coffey, Arvada, Colo., about her 1990 Ford-New Holland 276 bi-directional tractor that burned up.

Jimmy Byers, Brinkley, Ark., sent us the photo above that shows a blown-out battery (on right in photo) in his 1992 Ford New Holland 946 340 hp. 4-WD. Byers thinks the battery hold-down brackets caused the blow-out. "If Emily had the same hold-down system on her tractor, and the batteries blew out, that could have caused her fire. The problem is that the brackets are positioned too close to the battery posts. They corroded and then shorted out. The end blew out of one battery. We had battery acid all over. Our dealer didn't want to repair the damage but after I threatened to sue, he did."

Ed Swanson at the Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul, Minn., says one of the department's 1992 Ford New Holland 276's burned up this fall. "It went up so fast, the operator barely had time to get off. We're concerned because we own a number of these tractors. We don't want anyone to get hurt and we don't want to lose equipment." Swanson says he thinks the fire started in the articulation area and may have been caused by an electrical problem, but no investigation has yet been carried out.

Galen Travis, Burlington, Colo., who once had a fire beneath the cab on his 1985 Versatile 276, is convinced the fire problem is caused by friction between a drive shaft and crop residue that packs tightly into the area between the bottom of the cab and the frame of the tractor. "Trash packs in there so tight it's difficult to get it out," says Travis, who came up with a modification kit that raises the cab up a few inches (see story on page 29 in this issue).

Hubert Ragsdale, Wheatly, Ark., also thinks Coffey's problem may have been caused by friction. "I've been a volunteer firefighter for 28 years and a fire chief for 19 years and it doesn't seem likely to me that the cause was electrical. Look for bad bearings on drive shafts that might have heated up and ignited crop residue. Only a close and painstaking investigation will ever disclose the cause."

Jeff Greenburg, Stratford, Wis., experienced a fire in his 1990 Ford New Holland 276 that totalled the tractor. "It had 2,000 hours on it. Our hired man was driving it but, fortunately, he wasn't hurt. The fire appeared to start down in under the hood and may have been fueled by hydraulic fluid. Before the fire we had experienced problems with hydraulic hose breakage in the articulation area, where hoses, cables, wires, and driveshafts are all jammed tightly together. We were fortunate that our insurance policy provided full coverage for the loss. They never did tell us what caused the fire. I think the 276 is a tremendous tractor despite the problems we had."

Emily Coffey says she still hasn't reached a final insurance settlement with Farm Bureau Insurance, which initially offered \$35,000 for the destroyed tractor and swather, which were purchased new in 1990 for \$77,000. Specially trained fire investigators have inspected the tractor but had not yet come back with a final report at the time this issue went to press. She hasn't heard from anyone at Ford New Holland as to the probable cause of the fire. "One of our representatives came out after the fire and said he'd send a report, but we never heard back," she says. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Emily Coffey, 6187 Independence St., Arvada, Colo. 80004 (ph 303 422-2865).