

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

by Harold M. Johnson
Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

Melvin Frueh, Donnellson, Iowa: "It was a lemon from the first hour on, with bolts falling out, the electrical system shorting out, power steering locking up and the transmission oil filter plugging every five hours," says Melvin about his "worst buy" 2390 Case tractor. "When they tore it down after 60 hours, they found that some wear washers in the rear end had been left out at the factory. The dealer was helpful in getting things right, but the tractor I traded in — a 1370 — was nearly the same way. In 800 hours, it was down at least six times."

On the plus side, Melvin salutes his International 820 grain platform. "You can get nearer to the ground to get those low-standing soybean pods and make the field look as if you cut it with a lawn mower. Also, the cutting knife is faster so you can drive up to 4.5 mph and not strip the stems off. I've even been in a field with a John Deere row crop head and done just as good a job, yet can still use my head for small grain and drilled soybeans, which you can't with the Deere model."

and cracked welds," says Fred. "Factory representative looked at it and said we'd hear from him. That was 10 months ago and, so far, nothing but repair bills and inconvenience. Plow does a good job when it's working."

John B. Blanton, Gaffney, S.C.: "Has a powerful diesel engine, strong lift, quick hook-up, is easy to handle, turns short and is quick with its oil brakes," reports John about his Ford 5000 tractor, which he bought used. "Does large or small jobs economically."

Vern Armstrong, Diamond King Ranch, Midland, S. Dak.: "Why is it that the farmer is stuck with so much second rate equipment in a world that

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wants cheap food?" asks Vern, whose "worst buy" nominations are his Steiger ST 450 tractors. "We have two of these tractors and hardly ever have them running at the same time. The dealer has tried to correct things but the factory doesn't seem to care. We've had problems with gauges, radios, CB's, hydraulic hoses, hydraulic pumps, wheel seals, rear end, 6 U-joints, door latches, radiator leak, four starting system failures, clock and brakes. All have failed at one time or another. Guess who's stuck now that the warranty has run out?"

Vern has several "best buys": Krause 38-ft. disc — "Handles like a 20-ft. disc. It has rock flex gangs and we've had only one bearing failure in 10,000 acres."

A Caterpillar 930 wheel loader — "It took the place of two Dual 3000 loaders and more than outdoes them both."

T & L Center Pivot Irrigation Systems — "They're the Mercedes of the center pivot industry. What else can I say?"

Versatile tractors — "We've been using them since 1968 and have not found anything better overall."

Jerry Utzinger, Grove City, Ohio: "Wouldn't trade it for a Cadillac," says Jerry about his Chevrolet 4-wheel drive Super Cheyenne pickup. "We use it for pulling 500 bu. wagons full of grain, and as a fuel truck with 150 gal. vacuum pump, plus it's equipped with tools from A to Z to repair machinery."

His "worst buy" nomination is his John Deere 4430 tractor with hydraulic front drive and automatic transmission. The front wheel unit is a piece of junk. Okay when it's working, but it rarely works. It either breaks oil lines when working and dumps 10 gal. of oil on the ground, or, when you really need it, you push the button to turn it on and it doesn't work. Deere knows of this since I bought it new in 1974 but they hav-

W. E. Cox, Temple, Okl.: "The worst buy I ever made was a Krause chisel plow. The hitch was so weak I had to have a welder weld it before I had plowed 100 acres. That cost \$50. Also broke two rock shaft clamps which cost \$20 each. The bolts were too weak. The dealer wouldn't do anything unless the blockman approved. The blockman wouldn't approve so I called the president of the company, who said he would see what he could do. I guess he couldn't do anything, at least he didn't. I traded the thing off and got a John Deere."

On the plus side, Cox says "my best buys were two 6030 John Deere tractors."

Barry Denison, Metcalfe, Ontario: "If every machine and dealer were this good, farming would be a breeze," says Barry who is happy with his New Holland 1034 automatic bale wagon. "I've used the machine two haying seasons for 40,000 bales, and it's done everything well. Last year, I never lost 10 min. of time because of problems. Highly recommend it to anyone short on labor who puts up a lot of hay."

Fred Disosway, Sheldon, Ill.: His "worst buy" nomination goes to his International 700 trail-type plow. "The hitch and lift mechanisms are poorly designed — always break ing down with sheared bolts