

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

We asked randomly selected farmers to "tell it like it is" in nominating their "best" and "worst" buys in the past 12 months.

by Harold M. Johnson
Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

"I don't want to pick on any one farm equipment manufacturer, but I do have what I think is an important point to make," says FARM SHOW reader William Rowe, of Bethany, Ill.

"Farmers are being forced more and more to pay inflated prices for poorer and poorer quality equipment. We pay \$60,000 to \$75,000 for a combine only to be told, 'Be sure and go over it with a set of wrenches and make sure all the bolts and nuts are tight,' by our local dealers. We are charged exorbitant dealer set-up charges only to find that we have to set up items like field cultivators, row crop cultivators and bean heads ourselves anyway. Manufacturers are obliged to pass on higher costs of unqualified labor and materials, but they have yet to pass on to us any type of quality along with their inflated prices. This, to me, is nothing more than a result of poor management."

Here's how Rowe sizes up new products he's purchased recently:

Steiger Panther III 4WD tractor: "This is the first tractor we've bought that does everything we were told it would do. The dealer is over 160 miles away and gives us No. 1 service. Unlike some of its overpriced competition, this tractor is built to do heavy work. Sure wish Steiger would build a 4WD combine."

Ford F250 4WD: "This truck performed well when new, but the winter after the warranty was up, both front axles broke. I asked the dealer to check to see if there had been a number of these happenings. He told me that the \$700 it cost me to get the repairs done was not considered excessive, that the damage was due to misuse. The sales manager then said that the trucks were not

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made to stand the type of use that they show on TV commercials, reports Ronald Brown, of Greens Fork, Ind. "About three weeks later, I took the truck in because the gas mileage had dropped to about 6 mph. The same manager told me I should not expect any better because I had an off-the-road-vehicle. I then took the truck to a local mechanic who found the problem and, for a few dollars, fixed it. Since then I have been pleased with the truck."

1977 Chevrolet ¾ ton 4 WD: "I have had very good performance from it. This is the first 4WD I've owned, and wouldn't be without one from now on," reports William Ruther, Delanson, N.Y. "I pull wagons in and out of the field without trouble. It has an automatic transmission which saves me getting out to lock in the front wheels. It's almost like an extra tractor."

1977 Ford ¾ ton: "A real heavy pickup (8100 lbs. GVW) that drives and rides like a car, reports Phil Gish, Casstown, Ohio. "The 400 engine provides ample power and the super cab has plenty of room. The wife likes to drive it and delivers boars for us in the busy season. We're Duroc breeders."

1977 Dodge 150 Heavy Duty 1/2 ton 4WD: "We are very satisfied with this pickup. The 4WD is more than we expected. It has a 360 engine and a 2 bbl carburetor," reports Don Reynolds, Farnhamville, Iowa.

Here are other "best" and "worst" buys nominated by FARM SHOW readers:

Harold Brown, Camargo, Ill.: He had both good and bad news to report in commenting on new products he's purchased recently.

First the good news: He says his Deere 7100 planter gives "absolute precision planting depth in all types of soil. Dealer preparation and service exceptional."

The bad news: He's had some problems with his Deere 220 Flex-Head platform. "Myself and three area dealers unable to make the electric header control work in other than ideal conditions. Cutter bar too narrow to cut eight 30 in. rows if beans not standing perfectly."

Deere 7700 combine: "Poor parts availability and poor quality control cost us 2½ days of downtime last fall. The radiator fan hub disintegrated, throwing the fan into the radiator, causing four big holes in the radiator. Due to poor parts availability, it was 2 days and a 120 mile trip to get a new fan before the combine was back together. We were not offered any kind of reimbursement for the 120 mile trip we had to make. The dealer was there when we needed him — he just didn't have the parts."

Wil-Rich 45½ ft. field cultivator: "It has done more than a satisfactory job for us. Good quality. Built heavy to do the job. Cost was about half the price of its so-called competition."

Lasso: "Used it on our soybeans last year and it did not work. Neither Monsanto nor our custom applicator offered any assistance."

Pickups led the parade of "best" and "worst" buys from other randomly selected FARM SHOW readers participating in this issue's buying survey. Here's what owners like, or don't like, about their recently purchased pickups: