

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

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use
the survey form on our website at
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Roger Podoll, Wautoma, Wis.: “I do repowers, and sometimes the customer comes up with stuff I don’t know about. I needed a new clutch, and a customer suggested I try one from **Xtreme Outdoor Power Equipment**. They make a billet- machined, heavy-duty clutch. It is a very nice unit.

“I agree with Dan Lien’s worst buy (Vol. 42, No. 1) that doing a repower on a garden tractor can be frustrating. Unlike Dan, I still do them, but I start out by telling customers that unless they have thousands of dollars to put into it, I won’t even start the job. If the tractor doesn’t have sentimental value and they’re not willing to pay, I won’t do it.

“I’m an aircraft and/or power plant certified mechanic, and I can’t estimate a price. I don’t know what I’ll have to modify outside of normal repairs. It takes extra time to design and engineer fixes to kits. Then there is the time needed to chase down parts.

“I had one customer who paid me \$3,200 to replace a 17 1/2 hp. Kawasaki engine with a 20 hp. **Briggs & Stratton** on a John Deere 325. The shaft size was right, it bolted to the frame fine and the clutch went on with a new belt, pulleys and hydraulic hoses.

Jacob W. Miller, Chaseburg, Wis.: “I’ve never used an axe that splits wood so well,” says Jacob about his **Fiskars** axe (www.fiskars.com; ph 866 348-5661). The company guarantees its products if they ever break. One time I broke an axe handle and they sent me a new one right away.”

Elizabeth Cole, Martin, Tenn.: “The **Hoof Cinch** is a fantastic product and actually saved my horse’s life (www.hoofcinch.com; ph 507 459-6949). She’s a chronic founder and was on pain medicine as she limped around all the time. Then I tried using Hoof Cinch. It’s a metal band that tightens around the front part of the hoof to prevent the hoof from flexing, which eliminates the pain. Now my horse is off pain meds and walking easily.

“Inventor Chuck Potter looked at photos and X-rays, talked to my farrier, and supplied helpful advice. Wonderful customer service.”

Rich McDonald, Maple Valley, Wash.: Rich bought a **Gopher Hawk** mole trap after reading about it in FARM SHOW (www.gopherhawk.com; ph 805 486-8225). “This trap works great and is easy to set. It lets me catch gophers from above ground without ever having to dig out the tunnels.”



Eric Doll, Clinton, Mo.: Eric likes his **Wonder Winder** hand crank extension cord winder. It has a small basket attached to the bottom and is designed so that you can walk your plugged-in tool to your work area and the cord follows. When you’re done using the tool you just flip a rewind switch, crank the handle and the extension cord coils neatly into the basket, ready for the next use.

“This winder is indispensable for anyone who uses electrical cords a lot. I use mine almost every day,” says Eric. “It winds the cord up neat and fast and lets me move it from one location to another without tangling. It looks cheap, flimsy and gimmicky but does exactly what the company promises. It’s available at Amazon.com and many other outlets.”

Glenn Wilson, Crittenden, Ky.: “My 2004 **Deere** 110 commercial loader and backhoe is small enough for easy transport, but built heavy enough for tough jobs. I’ve used it with a grapple bucket to move 30-in. dia. logs and also to take down trees that size. It’s powered by a Yanmar 42 hp. engine which always starts right up, has plenty of power, and is fuel efficient. It comes with hydrostatic drive in three gear ranges and has excellent hydraulics.”

Bob Payne, Coldwater, Miss.: “I use **Harbor Freight** battery maintainers on my tractors, mowers, trucks, ATVs, and even on batteries stored on shelves. Vehicles that sit for months at a time will start right up.

“With larger batteries on cars and trucks, I hook up the maintainer directly to the battery to produce a constant trickle charge. With smaller batteries such as on riding mowers and ATVs, I use an inexpensive Harbor Freight timer switch. It turns the maintainer on and off several times a day to keep water in the battery cells from evaporating and ruining the battery.

“Harbor Freight sells inexpensive extension cords that work fine with their trickle maintainers. Trickle maintainers sell for about \$10 but discount coupons can bring the price down to about \$5.

“Eric Schmidt, chief executive officer at Harbor Freight, is working to ‘up their game’ by delivering better quality products

“However, the new engine kit came with a fuel pump, but not a voltage regulator. The Kawasaki regulator didn’t work with it. Luckily I had a Husqavarna in the scrap heap with the same type of plug, and it charged the battery fine. If not, I would have had to research model and part numbers and eaten up a lot of time chasing parts. How do you charge for that?”

“If you buy the engine kit, you have to know what you are doing and have the skill level to install it. I’ve upgraded clutches and starter solenoids and swapped automotive-type fuse links for fuse blocks. I’ve also had to develop methods to lengthen choke and throttle cables.

“With the Briggs & Stratton, I also had to split out the throttle and choke cable. They came on one control, and you had to go to full throttle to get the choke. That means very high rpm’s, which isn’t good for a cold engine. I split the choke out with a separate knob so it could be on while the engine loafed along.

“Replacing cables can be tricky. On older machines the throttle cable often goes across the top of the battery, and acid fumes can rust and corrode it. I slide new throttle cables inside a plastic sleeve when they cross over a battery, which is a good idea for anyone to do.

“Fuel lines are a special problem, as they can be 20 years old and brittle. I’ve found I need to replace the entire line, not just patch it. I start at the tank and go all the way to the engine.

“Exhaust systems are another challenge. You have to know how to weld and fabricate tubing to make the exhaust fit where it needs to go.”