

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

DeWalt tools. My most recent favorite is the DeWalt 20-volt 7 1/4-in. miter saw (model DCS361B). As a custom home builder, I find that it saves time and money to use a cordless tool. The miter saw is perfect for trim and finish work while still having the capability of sawing up dimensional lumber when needed. It's lightweight and makes setup and moving it to a site a breeze. Paired with a quality 60-tooth blade, it cuts with precision and zero tear-out.

"The worst product I ever purchased was the **Makita** 16-in. circular saw (model 5402A). This saw is an unwieldy monster that is very heavy, clumsy and dangerous. Like many of its users, I bought one to gang cut rafters as well as crosscut large timbers. However, the saw is so heavy and produces so much torque on spool up that it makes freehand sawing a difficult task, particularly if the cutting application requires a vertical position above the waistline. After wrestling with the saw through two home builds, I sold it."

Jim Link, Conklin, Mich.: "We have used corn seed from at least a dozen different companies. We tried **Golden Harvest** and their programs have been very helpful. Their prices are competitive, and yields are very good. Their soybeans are the best. Other companies wanted us to stay with them, but they couldn't compete."

George Wilkinson, Armstrong, B.C.: "Our 'new to us' 1998 **John Deere 770 4-WD** is an amazing little tractor. We bought it with 1,100 hours and it looks and runs like new. It has 24 of the best horses available."

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Doug Wright, Huntsville, Ont.: "Our 2006 **Kiotti CK30 HST** was 'bulletproof' except for an oil cooler that leaked. It was an awesome little tractor. I hope the 2019 **CK4010SE HST** with cab has as good a record.

"My **Milwaukee M18** reciprocating saw with lithium XC 5.0 battery is a real brute with a long run time. It's comfortable to hold and cuts well with **Diablo** metal blades. I even use it for pruning trees.

"My wife bought a used 2017 **Acura RDX** that she is really pleased with – no issues so far."

Craig Jackson, Chugwater, Wyo.: A **Kubota L2800 HST** with LA463 loader is a "best buy" for Craig. "I have been more than pleased with this tractor as it's so versatile and nimble on our ranch. The hydro transmission is awesome for dirt work, baling small square bales with a New Holland 326 wire tie baler, blowing snow with the Woods 6-ft. snowblower, mowing with a 6-ft. Bush Hog mower, etc. In the winter, I put a Bercovyl cab on it as well as a reengineered Myers 6 1/2-ft. snowplow on the front. It's an awesome tractor and I won't be parting with it any time soon."

Kenneth F. Cordova Jr., Whitefish, Mont.: "My **Husqvarna** small electric chainsaw works great. No yanking, jerking or gas smell. It starts at the first push of the trigger. It's mostly used to cut firewood."

"My **Rigid 3-gal. cordless shop vac** has great suction and a 20-25 min. run time on one battery charge. It's extremely versatile to use in any space or location and there's no hassle of using extension cords.

"I've had my **Black & Decker Workmate** for over 30 years and its uses are truly only

limited by your imagination.

"My 'worst buys' have been all the cheap and poorly designed hose reels I've purchased over the years. All have leaked, broken easily and had very short lifespans."



Grant Ozipko, Oak Ridge, N.C.: "The **Eley** garden hose reel has excellent quality and design, doesn't leak, and holds as little or much hose as you need. It's backed by a great warranty and service – truly a company that stands behind its products."

James Merida, Brookston, Ind.: "My **Craftsman 1/2-in. impact** is easy to use around the farm. It has a good battery life. There's no need for a generator or power cord."

Tom Abbott, Chipley, Fla.: "My 'best buy' is our **Nesco VS-12 Deluxe Vacuum Sealer**. It's proved to be a powerful and reliable appliance. It's more heavy-duty than most sealers out there. Living in a rural area, we have a garden and go shopping once a month and having a good vacuum sealer like this has proved invaluable to store our produce and bulk store purchases. We've had it in constant use for two years now and it's held up perfectly. My wife says it's the one appliance we'd have to replace right away if it ever failed."

Johnny Sutton, Ovid, Idaho: "In March of 2019 I took delivery of a brand new 2018 **Massey Ferguson GC1720 tractor loader backhoe**. It's been a fantastic machine. I am 77 years this year and it tremendously helps me. I only wish I'd bought one years ago. I've added BXpanded accessories (tooth bar and quick-on backhoe bucket), RanchEx 3-pt. quick attach, and a pair of R2 Manufacturing Edge Tamers. What a toy – I love it."

Victor Ohman, Glenrock, Wyo.: "My 'best buy' is the **WoodMaxx WM-8H wood chipper** (www.woodmaxx.com; 855-966-3629) purchased in 2016. I have Russian olive trees along an irrigation ditch and when I prune them, the chipper lets us put everything into one trailer load when hauling them off would be 10 loads."

Larry Drader, North Saanich, B.C.: "I bought my used 2004 **Toro Dingo TX420** to do an excavation under a house with a 3-ft. crawlspace. I thought I could use it to feed my small excavator. I expected the dig to take a week. We had it done in two days. It has a 16-hp. engine. It came with two buckets (3 ft. and 4 ft.), a chain trencher and a 4-ft. Harley box rake (I use it to reshape gravel driveways or rotovate fields). I have since made pallet forks, a log splitter, a 6-way 6-ft. blade and trailer ball attachment.

"I bought my 2009 **Muck Truck** for a steep drainage job for a friend. I had a small excavator but needed a way to get drain rock up a 40-degree slope. I figured I would roll a Bobcat and my excavator would take forever. I could load 500 lbs. of drain rock in the Muck Truck. One of my employees would head up the hill and I would start at the bottom. One



"When harvesting grass, I use a regular **Deere** riding lawnmower with a power flow bagger. I cut the grass and let it wilt for a few hours before dumping it into the **Bagger**," says Battani.

Mini Silage Bagger A "Best Buy"

Eric Battani, Scottsboro, Ala.: "I've been using the **Farm Tech Canada Mini Silage Bagger** for about a year, and I love it (www.farmtechcanada.com; ph 204-823-3641). I operate Daisy Blossom Farm, a small farm with 22 dairy goats. I sell their milk locally.

"Big dairies can put up silage in big bags or silos but that's not feasible for farms like mine. The Bagger lets me ferment and store grass and other crops the same way large farms do.

"When harvesting grass, I use a regular **Deere** riding lawnmower with a power flow bagger. I cut the grass and let it wilt for a few hours before dumping it into the Bagger. The 7-bushel hopper is enough to fill a 40 to 60-lb. bag. I spray it with about a gallon of water with two to three cups of molasses to help the bacteria grow.

"I use a mix of clover and fescue for the grass. Last year, I broadcast field corn on about two acres in late summer after tilling the ground. I let it get about waist high before cutting it and running it through a wood chipper and then the bagger. I did the same

with sunflowers, cutting them when the heads were about 3 to 4-in. across.

"I feed it to calves and rabbits I raise for meat, and the goats love it. I'm getting more milk over the winter. Normally, I see a drop in production because they don't like drinking cold water. With the silage, they are getting more moisture.

"The nannies have gotten fatter through the winter where they used to lose weight or at best maintain it. After feeding silage, I can hardly tell they've dropped their babies.

"I store the bags on a pallet for winter feeding. I've even been able to reuse silage bags.

"I used to spend \$700 to \$800 each winter on hay, and I expect it will be three times that this next winter. It is getting harder to find hay around me, as fields get sold off for subdivisions and farmers have trouble finding help. This way I can harvest enough feed for the winter on small plots on my own time, and it's more nutritious than dry hay. At \$3,900, the Mini Silage Bagger will pay for itself pretty quickly."

bonus was that I could get my guys to use a wheelbarrow. These are made in England, but I found an importer in British Columbia."



Thomas Corbin, Winfield, Penn.: "I had been wanting a plasma cutter for several years. I finally had a project that would make good use of one. After months of research, I selected the **PrimeWeld Pilot Arc 50A Plasma Cutter** on Amazon. I knew I wanted a pilot arc so I could use it on painted or slightly rusted metal. It was ready to use right out of the box. It's advertised to clean-cut 1/2-in. steel. So far, I have cut up to 5/8-in. steel. This cutter goes way beyond what I expected."

Mark Shorkey, Waynesville, Ga.: Mark's "best buy" is the **Graco Magnum X7 Electric TrueAirless Sprayer**. "For around \$400, this sprayer is versatile and easy to use with multiple fluid tip options. It sprays latex, oil-based, stain, and water-based products.

Make sure you clean it right away after use with the proper cleaning agent for the product used and then put the preservative into the sprayer for storage – it will last a lifetime.

"A **Troy-Bilt 4-cycle weed eater** sounded good in the reviews but wasn't in person. It had idle issues and stalled and reloading the string system was a hassle. I gave it away and bought an **Echo 2 cycle**. I'm very happy with it."

Steven Hickenbottom, Fairfield, Iowa: "I wanted a side-by-side that had a good cab so I could use it no matter the weather. My **Kubota 1100C** does that.

"My **Schulte 18-ft. batwing mower** is heavy and runs smooth."

Ken Young, Brandon, Manitoba: "In December 2020, I bought a **Snap-on** kit with 1/2-in. cordless impact wrench, batteries and charger (1,200 to 1,500-lb. model). This wrench slows down once the nut or bolt is loosened so it doesn't go spinning out of control. The torque settings do seem to work. One battery will do a lot of work and easily lasts a long, hard day. It's fairly heavy but that makes it more stable when being used. I've used it a great deal and am very satisfied. Battery tools are far superior to air tools for convenience and this one has exceeded my expectations."

Ronald Grzywacz, Royersford, Penn.: "Ten years ago I bought a used **Kubota L4610 GS tractor** with 900 hrs. It's run flawlessly since the day I bought it. It's used around hunting camp for food plots, road maintenance and snow plowing."