

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Jon E. Otts, Canastota, N.Y.: “My best buy is a 1992 **Dodge** 3/4-ton truck with Cummins diesel. My grandson bought this for me. I have no idea what the mpg is except it’s really good. It starts better than most gas engines. Everywhere I go it seems to generate a lot of interest. Load anything you want on it, and it just takes right off like it’s empty. I have to keep checking to make sure nothing has blown out.”

Keith Ambrose, Charleston, Ill.: “The best buy I’ve made recently is a **Milwaukee** battery-powered chainsaw with a 16-in. bar. This saw is so much easier to use than a gas saw. With two batteries, it will run longer than I can work at age 77. I’ve had great luck with all kinds of Milwaukee battery-powered tools from work lights to blowers to tire inflators and their impact tools and drills can’t be beat.”

James G. Gold, Cleveland, Tenn.: “My **Echo** SRM-2620 weed and grass trimmer is well-balanced and easy to start. It’s simple to load the cutting line. You don’t have to take the head off. Just cut a 15-ft. length of line and poke it through the slots. Pull through to equal length and wind.”



Randall Gay, Garfield, Ga.: “I bought my **Lincoln** PRO MIG 180 electric welder to build steel porch railings and steps on a house remodel. It was so much fun to operate that I’ve since built a mower trailer and replaced the deck on a farm trailer. I actually look for things to repair so I can use it. It was a very good investment.”

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Bruce C. Parker, Rio Dell, Calif.: “My **DR** all-terrain brush cutter gets to areas that I can’t cut with my lawnmower or tractor Brush Hog.”

Paul Kroeger, Porter Corners, N.Y.: “My best buy is a **Ryobi** cordless grease gun and battery combination pack that I bought on sale at Home Depot for only \$10 more than one without a battery. The grease gun makes lubing my New Holland tractor so much easier and quicker. I also purchased a **LockNLube** to use with the Ryobi – it makes the connecting and disconnecting so much easier (www.locknlube.com).”

Dillon Parson, Stephansport, Ky.: “My **Keen** Detroit soft toe work shoes have proven to be a very durable and comfortable shoe to work in (www.keenfootwear.com; 866-676-5336). They have held up to 10 mos. of daily use with little more than cosmetic wear. They’re well worth the expense.

“My **Ozark Trail** 1/2-gal. stainless water jug has been a disappointment. It leaked almost immediately. The lid gasket design isn’t good and allowed it to leak when drinking if it wasn’t on very tight. The drinking cap’s plastic threads were junk and stripped out.”

Charles D. Rector, Milton, Ky.: “My **New Holland** Workmaster 25S sub-compact 4-WD hydrostatic tractor is a best buy. It came with a loader and mower deck. It tills great with the 4-ft. tiller I purchased separately. The loader has been a back saver as I’m getting older.”



Larry Steinhauer, Wells, Minn.: “I found a **Milwaukee** Hatchet 6-in. 12-volt chainsaw at Home Depot. You don’t always see it on Milwaukee fliers. I use it from the lawn mower for trimming down trees and low branches. It works great all day. It’s small but mighty.”

Sven Carlson, Sheyenne, N.D.: “Since purchasing the **Haybuster** CFM-590 mixer wagon in 2020 we have seen a 25 percent savings in the amount of hay and silage that we feed.”



Charlie Brown, Harrison, Ohio: “About a year ago, I bought a **Honda** Acty mini-truck for my wife to use for running around our property. It’s one of the handiest vehicles I’ve owned. It has a good-sized bed to haul stuff, gets great gas mileage, and goes everywhere we need to without tearing up the ground. I paid less than \$5,000, which is a lot less than a side-by-side. The best thing about it is how well the heater works.”

Stephen Gredler, Reva, Va.: “I purchased a **Troy-Bilt** walk-behind bagger mower and mowed the lawn three times and then the engine popped and stopped. I have a small lawn – 45 min. mowing and 20 min. trimming. I filed a complaint and asked for my money back. The problem was that the air filter was just a solid piece of plastic. The engine had sucked in grass and leaves under the gasket and plugged up. I asked for my money back, but never heard from the dealer again.”

Robert Scharlau, Arcadia, Wis.: “Honda and Toyota developed gas-electric hybrid engines starting in 2000. My experience with **Toyota** Prius models from 2007 and 2014 has been fantastic. They each gave me 200,000 miles of trouble-free service. They average more than 40 mpg in Wisconsin winter weather and more than 50 mpg in summer. Their limitations are allowing only 4 passengers, some road noise, and only a 5-in. ground clearance. You can still get a new one for under \$30,000 but they are limited in supply due to high demand. It isn’t easy to find a used one either.”

Glenn D. Mewes, Blue Springs, Neb.: “I bought a used 2004 **Kia** Sorento SUV and it’s used every day by my daughter and grandson as a runabout. It always starts in all kinds of weather.

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Wild Hare loader system is available for all major ATV brands.

Pallet Fork Best Buy

Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.: “Pallet forks from **Wild Hare Manufacturing** (www.wildharemf.com; ph 218-483-1000) boost versatility of their hydraulic loader for ATVs. I’ve had the Wild Hare hydraulic loader (Vol. 40, No. 1) since 2016. I also had its predecessor, the Ground Hog loader, since 2004 and used both for everything from blading snow to moving earth and pushing logs around.

“The 34-in. long, 1 by 3-in. forks use the same 3-pin connection as the bucket and blade. The 1 by 2-in. back frame is 19 in. high by 28 in. wide, ready to catch and carry logs and beams once I tip the forks up.

“The electric-over-hydraulic pump and cylinders offer up to a 500-lb. lift with sufficient down pressure to lift the front end of the ATV off the ground. I didn’t come close to that lifting either bales or concrete blocks stacked on a pallet. One too many and the rear wheels were in the air. If needing to move many, I’ll have to add rear weight to my 500 cc Honda Foreman. The heavier the ATV, the greater the relative lift.

“Where the forks shine is the pinpoint accuracy when picking up logs and branches. I had no problem sorting through a pile of branches needing to be cut up before splitting.

They also made it easy to chainsaw at a working height, out of the weeds, and far away from saw chain dulling dirt. Picking half-buried logs and branches out of the ground was also not a problem.

“I put the precision control of the forks and the Wild Hare’s 3-way hydraulics to the test with a 10-ft., 7-in. hickory log. I wanted to lay it down as an outside border to my deer fence. I’d already scraped away the sod and laid down a strip of billboard tarp for the log to set on. Fingertip control of the loader and forks let me lay the log in as carefully as if I’d set it by hand and a lot easier. It didn’t even wrinkle the tarp.

“The Wild Hare loader system is available for all major ATV brands with a recommended minimum of 400 cc. Mike Benson, Wild Hare, reports the company is close to introducing a loader system for leading ATVs.

“The pallet forks are priced at \$419 plus freight and available direct from the company. Wild Hare offers a 38-in. wide, 35-in. deep, 19-in. high Lawn Basket for use with the forks. Four slide pockets on the bottom side slide over the forks. Two nylon straps attach to the forks’ frame. It’s priced at \$189 plus freight.”



Tierney’s log handling tools include Pinch-A-Log (left), a set that he made himself (center), and his favorite set that was made in the early 1900’s.

Best, Worst Firewood Tongs

Paul Tierney, Bloomington, Minn., has three different log handling tools and he has strong feelings about them.

“I burn a couple of cords of firewood in my shop every year. My wife, Teresa, and I split all the wood ourselves, so we need a good way to handle the wood chunks.

“I have one set of tongs that I made myself, based on other ones I’d seen. This tool is made entirely from flat steel with a double pivot point at the top to open and close the jaws and a circular handle at the top with a small chunk of wood inside for comfort. These work pretty well but are not my favorites.

“A friend gave me a ‘Pinch-A-Log’ clamp after it was featured in FARM SHOW (www.northwindtools.com; ph 208-215-5472). It’s nicely balanced and has a second handle that makes it easy to open the jaws to drop the log. But you can also pick up a chunk and then

push it towards a pile to release the jaws, all while holding just the single handle.

“My third log handler is my favorite and also the simplest. They were made in the early 1900’s and given to me by a friend. These log clamps have a contoured hand hold at the top with a chain link at either end that attaches to the pivoting tongs. What I like about these tongs is that I can pick up almost any log and toss it with minimal effort. They grab on to log chunks quickly and easily. All I do is sharpen the points occasionally. I doubt if anyone makes tongs like these anymore, but they should. They work great. I tie red plastic pieces on them so they’re easier to spot after I toss them on the ground.”

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