

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Gerry Webb, Greencastle, Ind.: "I like **Bosch** and **Milwaukee** cordless tools. You can't beat the quality of these tools and batteries.

"My 2019 **Ford** Edge leaks dust so bad that it can be seen in the air when you drive down any gravel road. The dealers can't or won't fix it, and the factory representative wouldn't do anything. We've owned many Fords, and still do, but this one's disappointing."



John Lekwa, Story City, Iowa: "I've had no problems with my 2022 **Woodland Mills** HM126 portable sawmill (www.woodlandmills.com; ph 855-476-6455). I use the sawmill as a hobby tool. I wanted to buy American-made but couldn't justify the added expense for a hobby sawyer. I'm still experimenting with it and learning. Overall, it's a very good machine.

"I've purchased quite a few **Milwaukee** M12 and M18 tools. Most have been home runs. The M18 Quik-Lok pole saw, weed whip, and power broom are great. The M18 leaf blower is really handy. They have good batteries, too.

"However, the M12 power caulking gun was disappointing. It's hard to control the amount of caulk as it doesn't stop when you release the trigger."

John P. Kemmeren, Bainbridge, N.Y.: "Our 2021 **Claas** Liner 2800 double rake is definitely a best buy. A true time saver and money maker. The rake allows us to mow full width and rake 27 ft. into perfect 4-ft. windrows for our round baler. It's well-built, easy to operate, and can easily stay ahead of the baler.

"Our 2022 **Honda** Pioneer UTV is probably our worst buy. It's hard to service and change oil and has had electrical problems which can't be found. It's time to trade for something else."



Jack Perry, Ashford, Wash.: "I purchased a **Halverson** 150 firewood processor with a 6-way splitting wedge in May 2023 (www.halversonwoodproducts.com; ph 218-587-2065). It's powered by my Bobcat 650 skid steer. I can now cut and split four full cords of home-heating firewood per hour in the comfort of my climate-controlled cab. I burn approximately six cords of firewood per year. This machine allows me to cut and split an entire year's worth of firewood in 90 min. Stacking it in the woodshed takes as long as processing. All in all, an entire year's worth of heat was cut, split, and stacked in under 4 hrs.

"A 5-ton, heavy-duty, hand-operated come-along is at the top of my list of disappointments. It started to break down within one hour of putting it into service. There was a spring, as well as a thumb lever,

which fell on the ground while the come-along was under load. It's in the class of junk that gets imported into the U.S.A. from overseas manufacturing. It seems that 'good, better, best' options from varied designers/manufacturers are no longer the norm. China, India, and Malaysia are the go-to countries of origin for the 'lion's share' of the low-quality products."

Mike Munson, Preston, Idaho: "My best buy is my 2005 **Chevy** Colorado 4-cyl, 5-speed manual transmission. I bought it with 37,000 miles on the speedometer, and other than a wiper switch and a clutch at 105,000, it's been the best pickup I've owned, and I've had several. It now has 130,000 miles and is still going strong."

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Harrison Benjamin, Hastings, Minn.: "My **DeWalt** 20V MAX XR 12-in. chainsaw is lightweight, and with a 4 Ah or 5 Ah battery, it'll run for an hour or more of trimming, depending on branch sizes. I haven't used my gas saw since I bought this in 2020. I don't cut firewood but maintain about 10 acres of trees on my farm. I've since purchased a DeWalt 20V pole saw and 20V pruner, which I've found to be excellent tools as well."

Roland Girard, Cochrane, Ontario: Roland nominates his two **Echo** chainsaws (500P and 400) as best buys. "I cut about 20 cords of firewood a year. I've had no problems whatsoever. I liked that they had a 5-year warranty."

Tim Fahnestock, Manheim, Penn.: Tim's the satisfied owner of **PrimeWeld** welding and cutting equipment (www.primeweld.com; ph 856-500-2000). "I've been impressed with the performance of these tools. I have the MIG285 welder, CUT60 plasma cutter, and TIG225 AC/DC welder. They perform just as well as the Miller or Lincoln machines at a fraction of the price. Their customer service is outstanding."

Rudy Oakley, Van Wert, Ohio: "I bought a **Deere** Gator 6x4 in 2001. I just had it in for its first repair ever. It's been a pretty inexpensive machine for all the years of use. We've run it almost continuously for all those years, keeping up with regular oil changes and maintenance service. We love our Gator."

Rudy isn't as pleased with his **Sears** 20-volt power tools. "The drills weren't too bad, but the circular saw and reciprocating saw were worthless. A handsaw was faster. The saw batteries wouldn't last 2 mins."

Tom Schauer, Lawrence, Mich.: "My gas-powered post hole auger from **Harbor Freight** worked like a charm. It did all I needed and more. For light work, it's a good buy."

David Peck, Silverton, Ore.: "Last summer, I bought a used 2008 6-cyl. **Toyota** RAV4. I bought it specifically so my dog could ride happily in the cargo area and not bug me while I'm driving. I installed a used WeatherTech pet barrier I got off Craigslist. The car had just over 100,000 miles on it. I've replaced brake pads, shocks, struts, and tires. It runs great, and my dog is thrilled to ride along. It gets about 27 mpg versus 19 on my 2012 Tacoma. It's become my daily driver."

Unfortunately, David hasn't had such a positive experience with his **Mr. Coffee** Brew Now or Later coffee maker. "This unit brews



Manthey uses The Original California Car Duster to keep his combine and tractor cabs clean.

Best Buy Hand Duster

Lorn Manthey, Northfield, Minn.: "I've tried a lot of different sprays, cloths, and fabrics to clean dust from our combine and tractor cab windows over the years, most with limited success. Some left a film that seemed to attract more dust while others left streaks and smears that were always a nuisance to see through. Now, my go-to solution is a product introduced in 1989, **The Original California Car Duster** (www.calcarduster.com; ph 800-282-8828).

"The Duster has a 12-in. long handle and an oval-shaped head that holds hundreds of cotton fabric strands 2 1/2 in. long. They collect window dust during harvest from dusty roads or wind-blown fields. My dad saw this 'miracle' product advertised on late-night TV more than 25 years ago and bought one for my mother because she was always complaining about the dust on the dash of his pickup.

"He paid \$12.99 plus S&H, gave it to my mother for Christmas that year, and she never complained about dust in his pickup again. She even had him buy another one for her car because she thought his Duster was too dirty. Ironically, that's one of the secrets to the Duster's success. The more it's used, the

better it cleans. I have the one my mother used on her car; it's more than 20 years old and still does a great job. The wood handle, fabric strands, and mop head are all still intact.

"The Duster works because its cotton strands are infused with a special type of wax. The Duster actually collects dust rather than just moving it around, leaving a clear, clean window or dash. To clean the Duster, I knock the head against a hard surface and most of the dust in it flies out. I've also blown it clean with compressed air. The dust that remains is absorbed into the waxy fabric and collects more dust when I use the Duster again.

"Like many products today, the Original Duster has knockoffs, and from what I've read, they don't work as well because they don't use the same type of fabric or infused wax. The manufacturer says not to use the Duster on a wet surface and don't wash it if you think it's too dirty. If it does get wet, let it dry naturally. Always store it in the durable pouch that it came in with the product name on the outside along with the words 'As Seen On TV.' You can't go wrong."

an okay cup of coffee. But almost every pot ends up with grounds in it. I think the basket that holds the grounds is too shallow, and the water overflows the grounds. I probably should've returned the darn thing."



Everett Klotthor, Slidell, La.: "My best buy is the **BXpanded** Piranha tooth bar (www.bxpanded.com; ph 865-671-0083). We can uproot scrub brush instead of chemical spraying to kill them or cutting them by hand."

Nelson Martin, Myerstown, Penn.: Nelson likes **SaberDrive** deck screws. "They're a screw to use around the farm and anywhere else needed. The star drive doesn't

slip, and the drilling tip keeps from splitting the wood."

Joseph Zech, Falcon Heights, Texas: Joseph is a fan of his 2021 **Honda** Pioneer. "Harley Davidson and Caterpillar have always been the gold standard for me. So, it was out of character for me to purchase this Honda. Much to my son's amusement, I nicknamed it 'The Wimpy Putterer' because of the exhaust sound. That was before I fell in love with it. I'm pushing 80 and don't get around easily. I can just turn backward and fall into this UTV. It's so easy to exit and enter, and it's unstoppable. I can use it to pull off tractor tires. It also carries me out into our South Texas brush to cut up mesquite."

On the negative side is Joseph's 2021 **Kenmore** top load washer. "It quit working just past the warranty coverage. I paid \$700 for a tech to finally diagnose an issue with the switch panel. I installed it myself after it was backordered for several weeks. The next breakdown, it goes to the landfill."

Gary Blecke, California, Mo.: "My 2012 **Polaris** Ranger EV is super quiet and reliable with sealed batteries for use around my mid-Missouri stock cow farm. Deer and turkeys are often caught by surprise because it's so quiet. It will climb anything if a driver has the nerve. I'm 82, so I haven't really challenged it."