

Smörgasbord



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**Lessons Learned From Our
"Best" and "Worst" Buys**

What's the best buy you've made in the past year? On the negative side, what's the worst new product purchase you've made?

Ever since FARM SHOW began 6½ years ago, we've invited readers to "tell it like it is" in nominating their "best" and "worst" buys. Many readers say this popular feature — a FARM SHOW exclusive — is the first section they turn to when each new issue arrives.

Which products have performed with flying colors? Which have been "lemons" because of poor performance, or failure by the dealer or company to provide service, or to live up to promises made before the sale?

To find out, we've tabulated the approximately 3,000 "best" and "worst" buying reports we've received from readers since FARM SHOW began in 1977. Here are the highlights:

Most popular products — The single most popular "best buy", by an overwhelming margin, is Deere's best-selling Max-Emerge planter. No other product came close to generating as many favorable comments. Among nearly 100 farmers who nominated their Max-Emerge, all but two gave it high marks as a "best buy" for a 97.5% score. (One owner was unhappy because the dealer had improperly set up his newly-purchased planter, and another was disappointed with the fertilizer attachment on the Max-Emerge planter he'd purchased).

Among owners nominating their International Cyclo planters, 72% gave it a "best buy" rating. However, this comparatively low score stems, in large part, from problems with earlier models. Owner comments we've been getting on the latest new "Early Riser" air planter have generally been positive.

Most popular company — In the popularity parade among major farm equipment manufacturers, New Holland was number one with an 88% "best buy" score from all farmers who nominated a piece of equipment carrying the New Holland label. Deere was a close second with an 85% "best buy" score. Deere's big pluses are its tractors, combines and the Max-Emerge planter. On miscellaneous machines (those other than tractors, combines and corn planters) Deere scored 75%, compared to 92% for New Holland, 71% for International, 50% for Allis-Chalmers and 37% for Massey-Ferguson.

Tractors — Owners of Deere tractors gave the company an overall 88% "best buy" score, compared with 72% for International, 79% for Case, 71% for Allis-Chalmers, and 52% for Massey. Deere's big winner was the 46 Series, with a 100% "best buy" score from farmer-owners, and the 4430 and 4440 models which earned 98% "best buy" scores.

International received a 72% "best buy" score on

its tractors, being hurt somewhat by early problems with the 1066, 1086 and 986 models. Delete these three models and International scores 88%, the same as Deere's overall "best buy" tractor score.

Massey's overall showing on tractors (52% "best buy" nominations) also suffered from an inordinate amount of problems with a particular model — the 1135. Deleting this model boosts Massey's overall "best buy" score on tractors to 70%.

Here's how other companies, some of which had less than two dozen total mentions, scored overall on tractors: Allis-Chalmers — 70% (seven out of every ten owners said their AC was a best buy, and three rated it a worst buy); Case — 79%; Deutz — 100%; Ford — 83%; Steiger — 85%; Versatile — 96%; and White — 93%.

Combines — International's new Axial Flow rotary is earning high marks from its farmer-owners. Among 33 owners who nominated their Axial Flow, all but one gave it a "best buy" rating for a 97% score. The one disappointed owner felt his local dealer had "dropped the ball".

Here's how other companies scored overall on combines: Allis-Chalmers — 56%; Deere — 79% (80% on the 66 and 77 Series); International — 89% (97% on the Axial Flow); Massey — 48%; New Holland 72%; and White 88%.

Random comments we've received from owners of the first Allis-Chalmers N-Series "rotary" combines have generally been negative. Cleaner combines, on the other hand, have generally earned positive comments from owners.

One buying lesson which comes through "loud and clear" is the importance of buying from a reputable dealer who stands behind his product. In many instances, the exact same product which one



"In the past, we've built large silos in the 100-ft. range but they were top unloading because there was no bottom unloader available that would keep working under those tremendous loads." Buttery points out. "Laidig's industrial 198 unloader has opened the door to bottom unloading of haylage, high moisture shelled corn and a wide variety of other materials in structures up to 30 ft. or more in dia., and exceeding 100 ft. tall."

For details, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Madison Farm Structures, P.O. Box 7697, Madison, Wis. 53707 (ph 608 244-1362).

**Your Chance To
"Sound Off"**

Here's your chance to share, in the next issue of FARM SHOW, your "best" or "worst" buy with other readers. Perhaps it's a new tractor or implement that has really performed with flying colors — or that "bombed out" because of poor performance. Or, your most memorable "best" or "worst" buy may have been a new pickup, building or maybe even a service of some kind.

Just send us a letter answering one or both of the following questions:

1. On the plus side, what's the "best" or most satisfying product purchase you've made in the past year or two? Please give the make and model, and describe your experience with the product and why you're pleased with it.

2. On the negative side, what's one of the "worst" new product purchases you've made? Please give the make and model and explain what went wrong.

Mail your report to: Best and Worst Buys, FARM SHOW Magazine, P.O. Box 704, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

farmer nominates as his "best buy" shows up at the top of another farmer's "worst buy" list. The difference, invariably, is that one farmer bought from a dealer who stood behind the product, the other didn't.

Tallest Silo — "So far as we know, it's the tallest on-farm silo in North America," says Don Buttery, vice-president of Madison Farm Structures, Madison, Wis. Nicknamed "The Beast", it's 24 ft. in dia., stands 109 ft. from the top of the foundation to the top of the roof, and holds 1,025 tons of haylage. It's owned by the Dedrich Brothers, Clover Dairy Farms, Hilbert, Wis., and unloads from the bottom with the new Laidig 198 heavy-duty unloader. The Dedrich Brothers use a Kools Brothers blower (1,000 rpm) to fill "The Beast" with haylage.

Judge allows "lemon" protest — Judge Phillip Petty, in Orange County, Calif., ruled that a disgruntled car buyer has a constitutional right to protest the dealership where he bought the car by driving it around with a coffin mounted on top. The disgruntled buyer also posted signs and distributed leaflets asking people "who were dealt with unfairly or dishonestly" by the dealership to contact the Federal Trade Commission, or the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Inducing milk from non-pregnant cows — Induced lactation will be tested on 20 New Zealand dairy farms this year as part of a continuing research effort in that country to bring non-pregnant dry cows into milk.

According to Dairy Exporter magazine, more than 90% of treated "empty" cows have come into milk in experiments at the Ruakura research station. They have averaged 60% of their normal daily milk yield, though the range is wide between cows. Spring induced cows have averaged 26.4 lbs. of milk daily at peak lactation. One Jersey produced 50.7 lbs. a day at her peak.

The research is headed by Dr. Steve Davis who says it could be five years before the induced lactation technique is available or approved for commercial dairying. Cows are treated with a sponge impregnated with progesterone. The sponge is left in the cow's vagina for 10 days. Six days after the sponge is inserted, the cow is injected with opticortinol in a muscle. Cows come into milk 2 days after the sponge is removed. Progesterone is a naturally-occurring progestagen which is always found in cows during pregnancy. Opticortinol is the synthetic corticosteroid used to induce cows to calve.

The milk-inducement technique doesn't seem to work unless the cows have been dry for two or three months, according to a progress report in the Dairy Exporter.