

# Best & Worst Buys

(Continued from previous page)

excellent truck," says Dale about his 1997 Ford F-250 4-WD equipped with 7.3-liter engine. "Even with an automatic transmission it gets 19 to 20 mpg. I've put 23,000 miles on it and haven't been back to the dealer yet."

**Ronald R. Taylor, Blockton, Iowa:** "It's dependable and reasonably fuel efficient for its age," says Ronald, pleased with his 1977 Ford 9700 tractor. "Any problems we had have been taken care of in later models."

He added a set of moveable magnetic rear safety lights for towing wagons. He also built a set of double break-away mirrors for use

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when he tows his 400-bushel Killbros grain cart. He built a two-arm frame out of 1 1/2-in. sq. tubing and fitted it with commercial round rear views. The frame, which bolts on the top of the cab, adjusts out to the full width of the grain cart with tension springs.

**Dean Ellermeier, Scribner, Neb.:** Dean's pleased with the handling, power, efficiency and durability of his pair of Deere 4630's, a 1974 and a '75 model. But he wishes Deere made a reasonably priced side exhaust kit and add-on front wheel assist for the tractors.

On the negative side, Dean's unhappy with his 1982 Deere 158 front-end loader. "It isn't quick-tach and there's no good way to modify it without cutting it apart, spreading out the arms, and building new mounting brackets. Basically, you've got to start all over."

**Raymond Larsen, Grinnell, Iowa:** Raymond nominates three "best buys", including a 1960 Deere 24T small square baler. "It's baled an awful lot of hay every season with very little expense. In my opinion, it's one of the best pieces of farm equipment Deere ever made."

Raymond's also pleased with his 1996 Dodge Dakota pickup equipped with Magnum 6-cyl. engine. "It's an all-around good serviceable vehicle, with smooth ride and good gas mileage. I'd recommend one to anyone interested in a smaller pickup."

His third best buy is a 1995 Hydra-Mac 1300 skid steer loader (Hydra-Mac International, 1110 Pennington Ave., Thief River Falls, Minn. 56701; ph 218 681-7130). "We use it for so many jobs around the farm, it's impossible to name them all."

**Paul Anderson, Paradise, Texas:** "My best buy is my 1987 Sears Craftsman 18 hp garden tractor. I use it to mow my 1 1/2-acre vineyard and figure that over the years I've mowed the equivalent of about three miles per week. I built a dozer blade for it which I used to push about 100 tons of dirt that I used as a base for my driveway. My only maintenance has been to replace the starter and a couple of steering shaft bushings. I also had to replace the mandrels on the mower. The company wanted \$75 for the main center mandrel and \$65 for the two outside ones. I rebuilt them myself for \$15 each. I also used 4-in. dia. PVC pipe to build a 10-ft. long weed wiper that mounts on front of the tractor. I use it with Roundup to control johnsongrass.

The wiper mounts on a homemade frame that hangs on front of the tractor."

**Dusty Rhodes, Dayton, Va.:** "It has a lot of power, handles and looks good, and has a cab that's easy to get in and out of," says Dusty about his "best buy" 1999 Ford F-250 pickup.

His "worst buy" is his New Holland 254 rake-tedder. "It isn't built with quality. The grease zerks pop out, wheel bearings break out, and the jack stand is wobbly. It's made cheap and is a disgrace to the company name."

**James D. Kurtzhals, Bristow, Ind.:** "I like my 1996 Valley electric drive center pivot irrigation system which is designed to cover 130 acres. No problems."

On the negative side, he's unhappy with his 1997 DR trimmer/mower equipped with a Tecumseh Vector engine. "The first time I started it the engine poured out blue smoke and wouldn't run right or run properly on level ground. The mower was sold with a money back guarantee, but when I contacted the manufacturer they insisted that I keep the mower and install a new engine which they sent out. However, the new engine also blows blue smoke and won't start well or pull properly. The plug fouls, and it burns about one quart of oil for every 1 1/2 gallons of gas. Also, it won't cut tall grass as advertised. Instead, the grass binds in the head and stalls the cutter. Neither engine was run hot, neither was ever low on oil, and neither was used on steep slopes. All service instructions were followed."

**Michael Cave, French Lick, Ind.:** "My 1997 Rossi 17-ft. tedder works great in thick hay and on uneven ground and is my best buy.

"My 1995 Lely 300 rake tedder is my worst buy. It's designed to be adjusted up or down by using a center link. However, I couldn't raise the rake high enough and I also couldn't turn at the end of the field when it was down. I traded it in for a new 17-ft. pull-type model which works great. However, it should have hydraulic fold wings."

**Michael Leary, Walkkill, N.Y.:** Michael nominates his 1998 New Idea 5408 disc mower as his "best buy". "It's well built and has blades that can be replaced quickly. No problems and no downtime.

"My 1997 New Idea 4844 round baler is a best buy. It takes less than 10 minutes for

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routine service, and it has never failed to make bales whether the grass is very short or long. The only condition is that the crop must be dry. I haven't had to repair anything. I really like the simplicity of design and quiet operation."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1995 Ford F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a turbocharged engine. "I've had to replace three fan belts, a belt tension pulley, and a water pump, and I've had problems with the clutch. I traded it in for a new 1997 model."



**Rodney D. Reese, Port Matilda, Penn.:** "The original 3-row corn head on our late model Case-IH 8750 forage harvester was very troublesome. It worked pretty well in ideal conditions, but would plug in front of the feedroll if the corn was short or if there were any weeds or grass.

"To solve the problem, we found a 3-row head off an IH-830 harvester and retrofit-

ted it to our machine. We cut about 220 acres with it this year and it never plugged in front of the feedroll. Also, we can cut through a field and turn around and go right back to split a field with very little crop loss. In addition, rotary cut-off knives are far superior to the sickle bar on the original head. The sickle bar wore out in just one season."

**Lawrence Pieper, Burlington, Ky.:** "My 1958 International 330 is still running after thousands of hours of use.

"My worst buy is my Deere 170 lawn mower. Three years after I bought it a heat solenoid (a small heat chip) had to be replaced at a cost of \$135. After that the mower did not run well. Four years later the transmission went bad which cost me \$545. I paid \$2,600 for the mower. I could have bought a less expensive mower and replaced it every three or four years."

**Larry Kluckner, Longdale, Okla.:** Larry's "best buy" is his 1964 Ford 100 1/2-ton 2-WD pickup. "I bought it one year ago equipped with a Model T flatbed for \$500. I couldn't be happier with it. The 292 cu. in. engine has a lot of power and the transmission and rear end are still solid. I replaced the oil bath air cleaner with a dry one and also installed a new U-joint. I plan to replace a tie rod end"

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1989 Chevrolet CK1500 4-WD light duty pickup. "The warranty service provided by my dealer was the only positive thing. At 50,000 miles the engine and radiator had to be replaced and the shifter on the 5-speed transmission had to be repaired. After the extended warranty expired I discovered that the front wheel bearings had to be replaced at a cost of \$200 per set. Last summer the thermostat had to be replaced and it turned out to be quite a job. I feel that this pickup is mechanically unsound and built cheap."

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