

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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national Harvester 1660 rotary combine I bought a year ago is a big improvement over my 30-year-old 1460. It's easier to operate, and the rotor design delivers a greater quantity and higher quality grain than conventional cylinder-type machines.

"In recent years I've purchased three new **Stihl** chainsaws - models 029, 036, and 280. They're all hard to start and lack power. I wish I could find a new coil for my old Stihl 041 model. It was a real performer."

J. J. Morris, Black Mountain, N.C.: "I'm happy with my **Kubota L3400** tractor. This is my third Kubota and, like the other models, it has performed beyond my expectations, requiring only routine maintenance.

"My **Swisher 42-in.** walk-behind mower, which I bought at Tractor Supply Co., is my worst buy. It has had a number of problems. First, the transmission wouldn't engage in fourth gear. Second, a bare spot got worn into the safety wiring for the blades where it was routed around some deck bolts. The company sent a new wiring harness and told me how to modify the rear panel so I could get fourth gear. However, after all that the mower was still too slow. I could probably mow faster with a 22-in. push mower. Thankfully, Tractor Supply took the mower back. Swisher has good customer service, but its quality control appears non-existent."



Sidney Stubbs, Beaverlodge, Alberta: "My **Woodmaster Four-In-One** model 718 Planer (Woodmaster Tools, Inc., 800 821-6651) has been a great buy. It molds, planes, sands and saws, and the variable feed rate lets me adjust speed for different types of wood. I add routers to either side so I can tongue and groove or edge boards any way I need to. I use it to make picture frame stock as well as finish lumber. I recently put a 26-ft. long 2 by 9-in. poplar plank through it without a problem. The planer cost \$3,000 new, and I bought another \$4,000 in accessories and paid for them all in no time with the wood puzzles I build and sell."

Klydon Farms, Brandon, Manitoba: "My 2007 **Kubota ZD18** zero turn riding mower equipped with a diesel engine is my best buy. This is our third ZD18 model and we've been happy with all of them. It has performed almost perfectly, with very few mechanical problems. It cuts well, is easy on fuel, and easy to handle. We use it to keep the grass mowed in our main grain storage area, and to mow two secondary storage areas at other yard sites. I'd recommend this mower to anyone."

Stanley Kelember, Brookfield, N.Y.: Stanley owns a 1988 **Dodge Ram 50** pickup. "It has more than 193,000 miles on it and seems like it will keep on running forever. I've replaced only the master cylinder and brakes. It still has the original exhaust and runs quiet. I drive it every day."

Marvin H. Lyle, Powdergrass, Georgia: "My **Stihl FS110** weed eater has far exceeded my expectations. Most of the time I use it with a brush saw blade. It's a tough machine and starts in any kind of weather. It has more than 200 hours on it but still runs like new."

Rick Kramer, Foreston, Minn.: "It's a dependable, versatile tractor," says Rick

about his **Deere 5205 MFWD** tractor equipped with a 521 front-end loader. "It does a good job of getting hay bales out through snow."

Luke Swantz, Bellefontaine, Ohio: Luke likes his 2006 **Karcher 950 C** hot water pressure washer. "It has high pressure soap injection, and I can get the water temperature up to 300 degrees for steam cleaning work. It's an excellent machine."

Wayne Humphrey, LaHarpe, Ill.: "My **Lil'house Heater** outdoor wood burning stove is my best buy (ph 417 581-7755; www.heatbywood.com). This is the third winter that I've heated our house with it. In the past we used 1,000 gal. of LP per year to heat our house, but last year we used just 300 gal. This stove uses less wood than I had expected. I never fill it up. Instead, I put a few pieces of wood in at a time, maybe four or five times a day. My only regret is that I didn't buy one years ago."

Scott Walter, Wanatah, Ind.: Scott's unhappy with his **Morton Building** tool shed. "It's on its third set of leaky windows. Snow blows in past them. The dealer has given up trying to solve the problem. Also, after final plans were set the roof pitch had to be changed because an interior wall wasn't set in the correct place. The roof buckled, which the company did fix."

John L. Miller, Howard City, Mich.: John says he likes his **Case IH** in-line hay baler for several reasons. "I don't have to be afraid of knocking down mailboxes while driving down the road; I can start baling anywhere in the field without driving on the hay; the baler has a short piston stroke so there isn't a surge on every stroke; and the windrow goes directly into the bale chamber which results in less leaf loss. Also, all the bales are exactly alike and every bale gets tied."

Lloyd Painter, Lima, Ohio: Lloyd's happy with his 1995 **Mantis** rototiller. "All I do is put gas in and pull the starter rope. It always starts in about three pulls. Last year I finally bought a new spark plug for it."

Greg VillaBona, Sudlersville, Md.: "It has excellent power and starts easy," says Greg, pleased with his 2001 **Stihl 036** chainsaw. "This saw wasn't cheap, but it has required only routine maintenance with no major repairs."

He's not happy with some porch posts he bought from **Lowes**. "The posts were hollow and cracked apart just three months after installation. Lowes would agree to reimburse only the value of the posts - and that was if the posts were delivered to the store and examined, and then sent to the supplier for verification that there was a manufacturer's flaw."

Earl Bestol, Purdum, Neb.: "My 2002 **Miller Bobcat** portable welder is always ready to go. No problems."

Pat Van Damme, Wallaceburg, Ontario: "My 2002 **Chevrolet K1500 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 4.8-liter gas engine has more than 120,000 trouble-free miles on it. I expect to drive it for at least another five years."

Sean Crook, Arena, Wis.: He had trouble with an exhaust pipe expander he bought from **Harbor Freight**. "We tried it on this wall exhaust pipe, but unfortunately the threads stripped before we even applied much torque. The same problem happened with two more replacement units."

Jim Wilson, Fraziers Bottom, W. Va.: Jim's impressed with **Inland Plastics Ltd.** heavy duty hay covers for round and square bales (ph 403 823-6252). "They've performed as advertised."

On the negative side, he lists the Chinese-made hay tarps he bought at **Tractor Supply Co.** "They came apart at the seams during the first year of use. About 90 round bales

"Best Buy" TYM Tractor

"I recently bought a new **TYM T450** front-wheel assist tractor and couldn't be happier with it. These tractors are built well and comfortable to operate," says Robert Snider, New Norway, Alberta, who sent us a photo of his "best buy" tractor. We decided to get a little more information on the little-known brand.

TYM tractors are made in Korea by a company that has been in the tractor business since 1958, and also has built tractors for Mahindra and Montana. They were introduced to the U.S. in 2001 and were sold in 11 western states and western Canada, before going national in 2008.

The tractors range from 23 to 100 hp. They're powered by either Caterpillar or Mitsubishi diesel engines, and come with a choice of Power Shuttle, manual shuttle, hydrostat, or a 24-speed transmission with a creeper gear. A "9 plus 3" transmission with nine forward and three reverse gears is also available.

Snider uses the tractor on his 840-acre grain and hay farm. "I've put about 1,000 trouble-free hours on it so far. My son also has a TYM tractor with about 600 hours on it. It's not a cheap tractor but it's built with quality.

"I equipped it with an Allied front-end loader. It's a great loader tractor and also a great haying tractor. I like how many standard features are on the tractor, including triple remote hydraulic outlets, a loader joystick, and a radio tape deck.

"When running a grain auger, I can idle the engine down to 1,250 rpm's speed to save fuel. And the engine burns clean - when we put the tractor in our shop and start it, a puff of smoke comes out of the exhaust. After that you can't smell anything."



Robert Snider is happy with his TYM T450 front wheel assist tractor.

Snider bought the tractor from Dale Owen, vice president of the company's Western Distribution Center in Redmond, Oregon. Owens says TYM tractors have the shortest turning radius in the industry. "The front axle features hydrostatic power steering and uses a double-ended steering cylinder that bolts to the front end housing and pushes and pulls to ensure precise steering under all conditions. There are no tie rods or linkages."

Owen says the company promotes the use of biofuel in the tractors.

The tractors come with a 5-year limited warranty.

According to Owen, TYM tractors typically sell for 10 to 12 percent per less than the competition. Prices start at \$10,995 for their smallest 23 hp loader tractor and go up to about \$60,000.

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suffered damage as a result. No more Chinese-made tarps for me."

George W. McCollum, Lockport, New York: George is disappointed with his 2005 **Ford F-150 Lariat** pickup. "At about 14,000 miles the pickup started to vibrate whenever I went more than 50 mph. The company bolted some gizmo to the left rear spring and told me to live with it. But that eliminated only about 60 percent of the vibration. When this pickup left our farm, so did my confidence in Ford."

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Stephen Rozic, Jr., Dearing, Georgia: "It has exceeded all my expectations regarding power, service, and reliability," says Stephen, pleased with his 2006 **Kubota BX1850** tractor equipped with a 54-in. mower deck and 48-in. Bush Hog tiller. "A comparable Deere unit would have cost about \$2,500 more. I saved even more by taking advantage of the company's zero percent financing offer.

"My **DeWalt 3/8-in.** corded drill equipped with a keyless chuck is my worst buy. From the first day I bought this drill the chuck wouldn't hold the bit tight unless I used channel locks to tighten it. All I received from the local Ace Hardware store where I bought it was sympathy."

Gary Eichhorn, Parkersburg, W. Va.: "My **BCS 8 hp** tiller equipped with a dirt blade and a sicklebar attachment is easy to use for lots of jobs (ph 978 456-3327; www.bcshop.com). I can walk beside the

tiller using just one hand as a guide. I use it to till leaves directly into my garden. I try to get 8 in. of shredded leaves mixed into the soil each fall.

"One problem is that we need to tighten or replace 5 to 10 rivets on the sicklebar attachment for each hour of use. Otherwise, it does a fine job of cutting everything in front of it up to the size of my thumb and it'll mow right through 2 to 3 in. of standing water. It's great for mowing steep banks.

"I added 35-lb. weights from a Sears garden tractor as well as chains, so I can use the machine to push snow off our driveway."

Kenton Mast, Alturas, Calif.: Kenton's the proud owner of a 1989 **Volkswagen Jetta** equipped with a diesel engine, which he bought used a few years ago. "We've been hard on this car and don't always maintain it like we should, but it still runs. We're always on the lookout for old Volkswagen diesels.

"I also like my **Canon S5 IS** digital camera. This \$400 camera has features found on more expensive cameras. Canon can sell you a user friendly camera that takes high quality photos, no matter what price range you choose."

Gerry Paulhus, Kindersley, Sask.: "Our 1985 **Honda Big Red 3-wheeler** ATV is our best buy. All we've replaced are the muffler and key switch. We use it every day. It has gone through four sets of tires."

Jim Parsons, Paonia, Colo.: "My **Drill Doctor** sharpens drill bits quickly. It's the best drill bit sharpener I've ever used."

Ron Stockwell, Killarney, Manitoba: Ron's satisfied with his 2004 **Deere** push lawn mower and bagger. "No major problems other than a broken throttle spring, which was likely my fault for getting too close to trees."

Renell Weeks, Swan Valley, Idaho: "We use our **Case 8850** swather to cut about 2,500 acres of hay per year and have had very few