

Jeff Webster, West Suffield, Conn.: One of Jeff's "best buys" is a 1987 **Matco** Mig welder.

"Since I got the wire feed adjusted properly, I've used it on a lot of sheet metal and it really speeds up the process. It's especially good in the field because it runs on 110 volts. The machine is very portable, but a rolling stand would be convenient. We made one of our own."

Douglas McKenzie, Stony Plain, Alberta: A 1996 **Ford F-350** 4-WD diesel pickup heads Doug's "worst buy" list.

"It was so noisy it was unpleasant to drive. I got rid of the truck with only 20,000 miles on it. Two months later, I was contacted by the new owner to see if I'd had any problems with it. Seems the engine block cracked at one of the main bearings (a weak point in the Powerstroke engines). Ford was trying to get out of fixing it by saying that because the truck wasn't serviced by a Ford dealer, there was no warranty."

George Swett, Carmel, Maine: Among George's "best buys" are three **Ford** tractors - a 1954 NAA, a 1960 881 and a 1966 4000.

"I've had very good luck with all these machines," says George. "The NAA has a Sherman transmission giving it 12 forward, three reverse and three pto speeds. Both the 881 and 4000 have Select-O-Speed transmissions, 2-spd. pto and ground drive."

Duane E. Haney, Chenoa, Ill.: The "best buy" 1997 **Dodge Ram** 2500 4-WD equipped with a V-10 engine is Duane's second **Dodge Ram**.

"The new one is smoother shifting and quicker starting than my '94. After 25,000 miles we haven't had to replace the thermostat, as we had to do in the '94. I've heard of two instances of weak springs in the '97's, so I'm having mine replaced. I'll probably buy another 4-WD Ram for my next truck."

"We use the Rams to haul all our grain out of fields via gooseneck trailers. During the winter, the '97 V-10 pulls a 31-ft. fifth wheel camper weighing five tons to Arizona. It'll cruise 65 to 70 mph at 2,500 rpm's no problem."

Don Duncan, Mountain, Ontario: "It cuts low to the ground and is heavy-built," says Don, pleased with his 1998 **New Holland** model 1431 disk-type mower conditioner. "It cuts fine grass 100 percent and is great in rocky conditions."

Leonard Sauverwald, Kerrobert, Sask.: "It's made me more money than any other tractor on our farm," says Leonard about his "best buy" 1967 **International** 806 tractor. "It has just under 12,000 hours on it and the engine has never been touched. It uses very little oil because I change oil every 100 hours."

Roscoe Haase, Valentine, Neb.: A 1993 4750 **Hesston** square baler is one of Roscoe's "best buys".

"I bought it at a farm sale and had to make some repairs on it. After that, it worked great. It is a well engineered machine and lets you know if the hay is too wet for baling. It's a simple piece of equipment to operate."

His "worst buys" were six 36 by 48-ft. hay tarps he bought for \$250 apiece from **Inland Plastics Ltd.** of Drumheller, Alberta. "They were OK if it didn't get windy. But all it took was one crazy, 60 to 70 mph wind to tear them to shreds. None of the tarps lasted more than a year."

Jim Dannen, Hampton, Iowa: A **Lincoln** 250 wire feed welder purchased within the last two years is one of Jim's "best buys".

"It's a quality machine with a stronger arc than many other welders I've used," Jim says.

On the negative side, is a **Snap-On** 1/2-in. dia. air impact drive. "I never had the power it was supposed to. I finally traded it off for a Mac and am real pleased."

Roger Biehl, Lexington, Neb.: "It's extremely dependable and doesn't cost much to operate," says Roger, well pleased with his 1979 **Deere** 544B 4-WD loader. "It currently has 18,000 hours on it. The engine, transmission and axles are all original. It has been back to the dealer for repairs only once in 18 years of service."

Chris Oehler, Strasbourg, Sask.: Chris's "best buy" is a 1996 **GMC Sierra** SLE extended cab 1/2-ton pickup.

"I'm well pleased," Chris says. "The passenger's seat slides forward easily to allow entrance to the rear seat."

Jake Herzog, Jr., Slingerlands, N.Y.: "The variable spray nozzle works well and the detergent additive system is extremely precise," says Jake about his 1995 **Karcher** HD 1050 BX power washer (Karcher Inc., 1600 Cottontail Lane, Somerset, N.J. 08875; ph 908 356-1199). "My only criticism is that the Honda engine could start a little easier. It always takes at least three pulls when it's cold."

Another "best buy" is a **Handy Air Lift** scissors-style lift fitted with a pneumatic cylinder. It'll lift objects up to 3 ft. off the ground (Western Mfg., Box 130, Marshalltown, Iowa 50158; ph 515 752-5446). "I bought it for servicing my motorcycles, but it works for just about anything you have to work on. It's well-built and a real bargain."

Robert E. Swanson, St. James, Minn.: "It drives great and gets excellent gas mileage," says Robert about his 1997 **Chevy** 1500 extended cab pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine.

"My **Deere** Green Star combine yield monitor is also a 'best buy'. After two years of collecting data, we're starting to see where yields are good and where they're bad."

Loren Tuelholke, La Bolt, S. Dak.: "It's the handiest piece of equipment I own," says Loren about his "best buy" **Sudenga** 8-ft. long, 8-in. dia. incline auger equipped with

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an electric motor (Sudenga Industries Inc., P.O. Box 8, George, Iowa 51237; ph 712 475-3301). "If I have several big augers set up for corn or soybeans, I can wheel it around myself to wherever it's needed."

On the negative side, Loren is disappointed with a chrome exhaust pipe from **Thomure Mfg.**, East Prairie, Mo. "I put one on my 1976 **Case** 2470 4-WD hoping to increase horsepower and reduce maintenance. All I got was noise and plugged up air filters. The pipe was apparently welded wrong and backfired exhaust through the air filter."

John Trausch, Roseland, Neb.: John had bad luck with a **Pro's Choice** 14.4-volt cordless drill he ordered from Pro's Edge, Danvers, Mass.

"The drill bits are no good and the screw driver bits get worn down at the slightest resistance, although the drill itself works well. However, the batteries do not hold a charge after two rechargings. Also, after purchasing the drill at what the company calls an excel-

lent price, I found what appeared to be the exact same drill with the exact same accessories in a tool catalog for \$30 less."

T.L. Conner, Albertville, Ala.: "My 'best buy' was an **International** 666 tractor I bought 19 years ago," says T.L. "It has 7,300 hours on it and still has the original fan belt and torque clutch."

Donald Spencer, Lucerne, Ind.: Donald's two "worst buys" are both 6690 4-WD **Agco-Allis** tractors - a 1993 and a 1996 model.

"I had nothing but problems with the 1993 model until the company finally replaced it with the 1996," says Donald. "The new one didn't shift right. You couldn't get it into or out of gear if it was moving at all. Then the gears locked up at 200 hours. The dealer split the tractor in the shop and found that the factory had installed the wrong clutch, throw out bearings and pilot bearing. They fixed the problems, and that helped for a short while. At about 400 hours it started to lock up again. So the dealer unhooked some kind of electrical switch on reverse. That helped get the gears unstuck but the tractor would still lock up."

"In addition, the pto never worked right. Neither did the air conditioning or heater. The hydraulics never worked on either tractor. The right front wheel on the '96 bent because it was built of poor materials."

"The company is going to replace this tractor with a 1998 8745, but that's going to cost me \$6,000."

"I'd like to know if any other farmers have had trouble with the 6690's. You can contact me at: 1180 E. Co. Rd. 1000 N, Lucerne, Ind. 46950."

Clayton Karrigan, Benson, Minn.: "It's still going strong after all these years," says Clayton about his **Deere** 7-ft. sickle mower with castor wheel on back that he bought new in 1952.

"We've mowed everything imaginable with it, including CRP land filled with gopher mounds and hauled-down alfalfa. This mower was built to last."

R.W. Tegtmeier, Sumner, Iowa: R.W.'s happy with the **Chevy** S-10 longbed pickup that he bought new in 1996.

"It's a good little pickup. I've put 11,000 miles on it with no problems," he says. "I bought it because I had a 1986 S-10 I put 126,000 miles on with absolutely no expenses."

Ed Jenkins, Morris, Ala.: "This tractor has performed flawlessly both harvesting and hay-feeding," says Ed, pleased with his 1993 **Deere** 5300 fitted with a 520 loader. "The tractor and loader seem to be perfectly matched and both are very quick. Plenty of power and comfort make the 5300 a pleasure to operate."

Duane Reid, Gladwin, Mich.: Duane's "best buy" is his 3-year-old **D.R. Trimmer/Mower** (Country Home Products, Meigs Road, P.O. Box 25, Vergennes, Vt. 05491; ph 800 616-3535). "This trimmer is a lot smoother and safer to operate than any hand held trimmer," he says.

Douglas Yergens, Blanchard, Idaho: Douglas counts his **DeWalt** 18-volt trim saw and **Makita** 12-volt drill as two "best buys".

"The trim saw has lots of power and is very handy to use. It definitely needs two batteries so you never have to wait on a charge."

"My Makita has been with me for six years. It has been used for everything from barn roof repair to hanging curtains. It's hard to believe how versatile it is."

John Hardage, Lockhurst, Texas: "My 'best buy' is a 1966 52 hp **Ford** 4000 tractor

I bought used," says John. "It's always been dependable and rugged. It starts every time. I use it for mowing, digging post holes, and plowing and I've never done a thing to it except change the oil."

John's also pleased with his **DeWalt** 14-

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in. chop saw, which has given no problems whatsoever in the three years he's owned it. "Cuts straight every time," he says.

Rubin L. Teat, Jr., Rainsville, Ala.: "I'd like to trade for a new one, but this one just keeps on giving me great service," says Rubin about his "best buy" 1982 **Dodge** pickup equipped with 318 cu. in. engine with 4-speed overdrive transmission. "It has 435,000 miles on it and still runs great. The air conditioning still works."

"I have two other 1984 **Dodge** pickups equipped with 318 cu. in. engines and automatic transmissions. One has 275,000 miles on it and the other has 185,000. Guess you could say they're all 'best buys'."

Pat Kelly, Charlo, Mont.: Pat's "best buy" is a wire welder he bought 15 years ago from **Snap-On Tools** and manufactured by **System Matics**. "I've had absolutely no trouble with it in all the years I've used it in my farm repair and manufacturing shop," he says. "I don't think there's any way it could be improved upon."

Ervin Schultz, Bowbells, N. Dak.: Ervin's owned two **Dodge** Caravans and he's been well pleased with both. "The first was a 1984 model that gave us 200,000 miles of service with only two \$500 repairs," he says. "The second is a 1994 Grand Caravan that we've put 94,000 miles on. The only repair it's needed was a water pump replacement."

Keith Russell, Cremona, Alberta: "My 1976 **Deere** 4430 has 8,000 hours on it. The only thing we've had problems with is the transmission. It's a reliable tractor that puts out 144 hp on the dynamometer."

"My 1989 **Ford** F-250 pickup equipped with a 351 cu. in. V-8 engine is my worst buy. It was always in the shop and was hard on fuel. I think the problem is that it's geared too high."

Warren Brown, Climax, Sask.: "The powershift transmission makes this tractor a dream to operate," says Warren about his 1995 **Ford** Genesis 8970 front wheel assist tractor. "It's easy to operate and is easy on fuel. It had some minor hydraulic problems, but my dealer solved them immediately."

Joe Appling, Crosbyton, Texas: "My 1997 **Case-IH** 900 planter will plant under any conditions except for extremely muddy ground."

"My **Miller** AC-DC welder has a lot of power."

Neil Bertelsen, Caroline, Alberta: "I'm impressed with my 1996 **AT-300** multi-purpose lathe-mill-drill made in China (distributed by House of Tools, 100 Mayfield Common N.W., Edmonton, Alberta T5P 4B3 ph 800 661-3987). What I like about it was the cost - \$1,600. It does accurate work and is very versatile. It's built heavy so it's easy to use. It's made a little crude and has no

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