

Best & Worst Buys

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wet barley and wheat well into October, yet we had no problems other than with the header, which was four years old. It's a really nice combine to operate and has a lot of capacity. It's also easy to service."

On the negative side, he lists his 1992 **Suzuki** Quadrunner 4-wheeler ATV. "The engine runs too rich which fouls the plugs and allows gas into the oil, etc. The company knows there's a problem but doesn't

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have any solutions. We've had the carburetor gone over two or three times. It seems to be running well now after a new main jet and slide were installed. I like how the machine is geared and I also like having four wheel drive."

Frank Carlton, Boomer, N.C.: Frank says his **Massey Ferguson 375 4-WD** tractor is his "best buy". "We mounted a **Massey Ferguson 938** loader with grapple forks on it which works great, too. No problems after 1,700 hours."

Charles Crossman, Ortonville, Mich.: A 1994 **Deere 1219** mower heads Charles's "best buy" list. "I traded in my 18-year-old **Deere 1209** model which worked great. To my surprise the new model has a non-clog cutterbar which has never plugged. It's a real joy to operate and is a great machine."

Donald E. Ham, Winterset, Iowa: Donald's disappointed with his 1994 **Howse 7000 7-ft.** rotary mower. "The blade hubs are too small and are the same size used on the company's 4 and 5-ft. models. The blades are too long and blade temper is inconsistent - some blades are too soft and bend, while others break like glass. Another problem is that the power train is built too light. No one in our area handles parts for anything but the smaller mowers. The only way to get parts is to order them from Laurel, Miss., by UPS."

Buel Pearson, Isabella, Okla.: Buel likes his **Lincoln Ranger 8** portable welder. "I've used it for 2 1/2 years and have 540 hours on it with no problems. The battery is still good."

"I've had problems with my **Cebora** plasma cutter which is made in Italy. I couldn't get it to run for more than four or five minutes before it would quit. Then I had problems with the head. The company replaced the head but it lasted only about 10 minutes. That cost me \$150. I won't buy another plasma cutter unless it's American made."

Matt Taraska, Crivitz, Wis.: Matt's had problems with his new **Deere 110 12-ft.** 10-in. disk which is equipped with cone disc blades spaced 9 in. apart. "The disk is built too light all the way around and should have an extra bearing on front and on each side. It's built with 2 by 3-in. support beams that are built too light and should be stronger. Also, the wheel bearings go out too quick and aren't easy to adjust. For what this machine costs it should be built with better quality."

Earl Nottelman, Winona, Minn.: "My

1993 **Snapper** riding mower has a lot of power and is my best buy. I use it to mow my 5-acre lawn once or twice a week on hilly land that has a lot of bushes, trees, and buildings. No problems."

Idris Hughes, Sylvan Grove, Kan.: Idris owns a 1997 **Gleaner R62** combine. "It does a good job of cleaning and separating and works well in tough threshing conditions - better than conventional combines I've operated. I use it to harvest winter and spring wheat, soybeans, corn, milo, sunflowers, canola, and sometimes barley and rye. It has a lot of capacity and the company provides good support. The 1996 models were underpowered but hopefully that problem has been resolved on the 1997 models. I had problems with the hydrostatic transmission but they've been resolved."

"I wish **Gleaner** would quit relying on other sources for many of their parts and manufacture their own. The combine handles a 30-ft. straight header and 8-row corn header perfectly. However, I'm not satisfied with the **AGCO 600** series draper header. It isn't built heavy enough and wasn't tested extensively enough before it went on the market."

Bob Candrian, Adin, Calif.: A 1994 **Deere 670** tractor equipped with loader and backhoe attachments rates as Bob's "best buy". "This small tractor does everything I ask of it and is just the ticket for our 46-acre ranch. Although it has a small 3-cyl. 18 hp engine it pulls strong in 4-WD."

Russ Brandt, Postville, Iowa: Russ owns three 1995 **Gehl 980 16-ft.** forage boxes mounted on 12-ton tandem axles. "I farm with my father and we do some chopping for a couple of neighbors along with our own. Last year we put about 600 loads through the wagons. They unload smoothly without 'slugging' the blower."

"My two **Deutz-Allis 6275** front wheel assist tractors are both terrific."

J.J. Hootman, Floris, Iowa: "My best buy was my **Deere 535** round baler."

"My worst buy is my **Marliss** no-till drill. I followed the company's suggestions on how to get it to plant at the right depth for two years. I wanted wider press wheels but the company would only sell them to me at \$61 apiece. I finally bought new wide press wheels from **Shoup Mfg.** for \$26 apiece. Now I have to solve the problem of having to change two sets of sprockets and chains whenever I switch from planting oats to beans. I also had to straighten out the guides on the press wheel springs - the guides were welded together wrong at the factory and are half worn out after planting only 200 acres."

Ken Loewenhagen, Hortonville, Wis.: "I've owned **Arctic Cat** snowmobiles for 27 years, but I seriously doubt whether I'll ever buy another one. Last October my wife bought a new **ZR 580** electronic fuel-injected snowmobile and also a new **ZL 440** model. We used them for the first time during a week-long vacation up north. The first time we started the 580 we had problems with a scoured piston. That was just the beginning. By the time the snowmobiles had 1,000 miles on them, I had put more than 600 miles on my truck driving back and forth to the dealer who's only 20 miles away. The dealer did all he could to help. My complaint is with the company itself. I sent five

different letters to them, but the only response was a form letter saying they were sorry and that they would contact the dealer to see why we were having problems."

"I called the company and was told that a service manager would contact me the next day. That was two months ago and I haven't heard anything even though the dealer contacted the company three times asking them to call me. Another problem is that five months after buying the machines we still don't have a warranty card. The dealer told the company about the problem and I mentioned it in all of my letters as well as during my phone call. I'm a very patient person, but this is ridiculous. I guess it's time to change brands. I feel sorry for the company's dealers. It's no fun trying to deal with companies that aren't customer oriented. I know this because I'm a service manager for an equipment dealer. When we have this kind of problem we stop selling the product."

Art Bingham, Clare, Ill.: He's dissatisfied with his **Brent CPC** chisel plow combination tillage tool with a disk gang on back. "The problem is that the transport wheels are positioned after the ripper and pack down the upturned soil. This wheel track is hard on soil structure and difficult to fill in with the rear disks. If the gang fills in the track, the pass is uneven in the middle and ends."

Art is pleased with his **KEW** Magnum pressure washer (model 1220H Scorpion) with hot water and variable pressure at the wand. "It's compact, easy to use and the hot water lets us reduce pressure at the wand. The grease and dirt still come off great and I don't get all wet. If I need the pressure, I can adjust it up and blast away."

Dick Burd, Canton, S. Dak.: He's happy with his new **Drill Doctor** precision drill bit sharpener. "It's the first drill bit sharpener I've ever seen that's real easy to use and actually works. It's got a diamond sharpening wheel so it doesn't get the bits



hot. It's as easy to use as a pencil sharpener and it'll sharpen bits up to 3/4-in. dia. in just under a minute. The grinding wheel turns at 13,500 rpm's and it's got a built-in alignment system. I paid \$169.95." (Contact: Dakota Sales, 7560 153rd Ave. SE, Wyndmere, N. Dak. 58081 ph 800 260-9944 or 701 439-2860).

Larry Dyck, Campden, Ontario: A 1995 ATV sprayer from **JM Innovations** heads Larry's "best buy" list. "I pull it with a **Suzuki Samarai** jeep. It has a 200 gal. tank and 50-ft. boom. The sprayer is well-built and works like a charm. I sprayed more than 3,000 acres with it in the last year, applying everything from 28 percent nitrogen on wheat at 23 gal./acre to herbicides at 5 gal./acre. It handled everything well. I wouldn't trade it for anything. It's lightweight, fast and eye-catching."

Don Voss, Spiritwood, Sask.: "My 1995 **P.M.I. 1511** round baler is the best baler on the market. It makes great bales with little trouble. It's also priced right. Unfortunately, **AGCO** has bought the company and plans to close the Canadian plant

and move production to the U.S."

Peyton E. Smith, Covington, Tenn.: "My **Deere 7100** no-till planter that I bought 7 or 8 years ago has been a good buy. I've planted in everything from fescue to wheat to shoulder-high vetch with good results. It's equipped with 3 bu. hoppers and cast iron clothing wheels. Does a fine job."

Norman J. Gagnon, St. Alphonse, Manitoba: "My best buy is my 1991 **Deere 8560** tractor which has 4,100 hours on it. It's an outstanding tractor that's easy on fuel and trouble-free. However, I wish it had bigger 20.8 by 38 tires instead of 18.4 by 38's. We recently purchased a new **Deere 9300** tractor equipped with a 360 hp engine to help out on our farm."

Mel Selin, Camrose, Alberta: A 1980 **Owatonna** round baler bought used rates as Mel's "best buy". "It makes very firm bales and handles straw and hay without any problems. It doesn't have any belts that have to be relaced or replaced. The drums run very quiet, and the hydraulic tying system is simple and reliable. I can even use it to make silage bales."

Daniel Myers, Amite, La.: Daniel owns a 1993 **Case-IH 3594** front wheel assist tractor equipped with a 504BDT engine and 24-speed transmission. "It's controlled by a computer that we can't get to work right. I've done everything the dealer suggests. I've had this tractor for 3 1/2 years and it has run a total of only about six days."

Paul Erickson, Balaton, Minn.: Paul likes his **Case-IH 1660** Axial Flow combine. "I really like the simplicity and capacity of this machine. It's the second Axial Flow combine I've owned and I've been well satisfied with both of them. Very little downtime."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists **Armstrong** farm tires. "It seems like I constantly have to fix flat tires because of stubble damage."

Walnut Dale Farms, Boswell, Penn.: "We traded a **New Holland 1890** self-propelled forage harvester and a **Deere 3960** forage harvester in for a 1996 **Gehl 1065** pull-type harvester. Both of the old machines did a good job, but we had some expensive experiences with foreign metal objects and wanted a machine equipped with a metal detector."

"We use a **Deere 4630** tractor to pull the harvester and it performs quite well. We're glad that we have the metal detector. Last year while we were harvesting silage the metal detector went off 33 different times on 26 rows of corn that bordered a fence around our property. It turned out that a month before we went into the field our neighbor had a young fellow replace the electric fence wire. He threw lengths of old wire helter-skelter into our standing corn. Without the metal detector we'd never have known about the wire."

On the negative side, he lists parts-ordering through the **AGCO** company. "My dealer tries his best to provide good service, but ordering parts through the **AGCO** system can be a real nightmare. I once ordered an oil seal for a manure spreader but instead received a shear bar designed for a loader bucket. It turned out that both items had the same part number. Recently I needed to rebuild an axle assembly for my **White** field cultivator. After three deliveries of parts that didn't fit, I disassembled another axle and found the matching parts at a **Deere** dealership."

Tom Sparks, Waldron, Iowa: "Four years ago I bought a new **Zetor 5211** low-profile tractor. It's perfect - no problems of