

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

"My **Global Hydronics** outdoor wood burning furnace is a best buy (www.globalhydronics.com). It keeps us real warm, and eliminates the need to use gas to heat our home or hot water. I got a tune-up on my old **Echo** chain saw and went back to working in the woods. It's so nice not to have a huge heating bill any more. Over the years my Echo chain saw has paid for itself many times over. At today's fuel prices, my Global Hydronics furnace will save enough money to pay for itself in four years.

"My **Gateway** computer system is my worst buy. It has required five new hard drives, two new mother boards, two new power supply systems, and only the company knows what else. The computer came with a 3-year in-home service warranty, which I think is a joke. The toll-free help line was a nightmare. I had to go through four or five operators until I got one who agreed to service the computer, only to have a supervisor then refuse the order. The company finally agreed to repair the computer just days before the warranty expired, after I told them I was making a sign for my semi truck which I drive nationwide. Even though the computer was repaired, it now runs slower than it did when it was new."

Ralph A. Orsi, Silvis, Ill.: "My **Husky** Rotator 3/8-in. drive ratchet, which I bought at Home Depot, is my best buy. It works like a normal ratchet, but when you twist the handle the socket rotates. A little wheel on top changes the direction of the ratchet, and pressing a button on top releases the socket."

Jim Wepler, Lebanon, N.J.: Jim likes his **Deere 5420 4-WD** tractor equipped with a front-end loader. "This is a solid, mid-size tractor and I've had no problems with mine. We use it for cleaning out our pole barn, handling round bales, and operating our 7-ft. snow blower. If the rest of the Deere equipment line works as good as this tractor, we'll be switching from red machinery to green."

Ross Allen, Poteau, Okla.: "My 2002 **Hobart** Handler 125 welder is my best buy (www.northerntool.com). This welder has saved me a lot of money by allowing me to fix all sorts of equipment by myself. The only negative is the welding wire costs too much."

Steve Lucas, Westmont, Ill.: Steve's disappointed with his **Homelite** gas leaf blower which he purchased from Home Depot for \$89 plus tax. "This machine wouldn't start unless I took the spark plug out and poured a gas/oil mixture into the cylinder. I returned it for another one and it started okay, but then developed a rod knock. I exchanged it for a third machine but it wouldn't start, either. The Home Depot store manager tried starting the first and third machines with no luck. I thought I'd have to call 911 for an ambulance, as he was totally exhausted and finally had to sit down after pulling on the cord for three to five minutes. I got a refund and then went to Ace Hardware and bought a Ryobi leaf blower for \$30 more. It works fine."

Benton Hester, Florala, Ala.: Benton says his **Bush Hog 287** rotary cutter is his "worst buy". "My 14-year-old Brown 7-ft. rotary cutter was worn out so I replaced it with this model, which was supposedly a premium brand. However, it has caused nothing but trouble. First, the 3-pt. lift points are engineered so that you can't pick the arms up high enough to drive the tractor onto a trailer or even to clear terraces. A company engineer said it was designed this way because of liability problems from roll-overs. The wheel bearings are an unusual straight roller design, vulnerable to hay twine and available only from Bush Hog. The 'stump-jumper' nut and cotter are always working loose, the nut being an old metric pitch that again is available only from Bush Hog. The machine was de-

livered with water in the gearbox, which the dealer removed. However, water infiltration remains a problem unless I cover the gearbox with a bucket."

Robert Szabo, Westland, Mich.: "I bought my **Toro 20-in.** Snow Master snowblower 10 years ago for \$20 from a lady who was moving to Florida, and it has been trouble-free and has saved my back and heart."

"I like my **Toro 21-in.**, 3-blade mower. The grass catcher is easy to take off and empty, and I can fill the crankcase with Slick 50 oil straight from the bottle. I use this mower every spring, summer and fall. It doesn't burn any oil and always starts on the second pull. It still has the original spark plug."

On the negative side, "We bought a **Maytag Neptune** automatic front load washing machine in 1999 for \$1,096. It's a complete piece of junk. The control boards shorted out, and the tub bearing burned out after six years so I'm scrapping it. It does have a good motor and good control boards. I'm willing to sell parts from it."

Mel Thompson, Armstrong, Iowa: "My **Cub Cadet 3205** tractor equipped with a 54-in. mower deck is my worst buy. I have no complaints about the tractor, as it has good power steering, a tilt steering wheel, cruise control, a water-cooled Kawasaki engine, and a deck that's easy to remove and replace. But the left front corner of the deck plugs up with grass after only about 10 minutes of mowing. Another problem is there's way too much clearance between the end of the blades and

"The left front corner of the deck plugs up with grass after only about 10 minutes."

the deck. I'd like to hear from anyone who has solutions to any of these problems."

Bill Brandt, Concordia, Mo.: Bill says the **TSR** chopper he mounted on his Case 2188 combine is his "worst buy". "It's built too light, and the knives come out on a daily basis. The splines on the drive pulley stripped on the second day of use. The knives broke and damaged the chaffer."

James Brooks, Homer, Ga.: James is impressed with the **NAPA** Workaholic batteries he bought in 2004. "I've tried all types of batteries in both farm and heavy construction equipment. These batteries last longer than their warranty, outlasting even Exide batteries."

"My 2004 **Weed Eater** weed trimmer is my worst buy. The string trimmer head doesn't last very long, and a replacement head cost more than \$40. I bought it at Home Depot which doesn't sell Weed Eater products any more, not even the trimmer string. However, the machine itself runs great. We're still using a hand held Weed Eater trimmer that we bought more than 25 years ago, and we've used it hard."

George Hodges, Westfield, N.C.: "My 2003 **Hesston** round baler is my worst buy. The unit was delivered with everything out of adjustment and with no hitch bolt assembly, so I made my own even though it's supposed to be standard equipment. After three seasons of use it almost works okay now. But recently I discovered that the dipstick for the gearbox fell into the gearbox."

Art Mangels, Dillon, Mont.: "My two **Case IH** Magnum front wheel assist tractors, one a 1989 model 7120 and the other a 1990 model 7140, are both best buys. They start easy and have a lot of pulling power. The 7140 has about 8,500 hours on it but is still going strong. The cabs on these tractors are

He Likes His Kubota Utility Vehicle

How about a new Kubota 4-WD utility vehicle for your 50th wedding anniversary? That's what Teddy Shambaugh got last year, and he couldn't be more pleased.

What Teddy, of Cerro Gordo, Ill., likes about his Kubota RTV 9000 is that it lets him go anywhere in any kind of conditions. He decided to take advantage of that ability by building a two-part, slide-in sprayer that he uses to control weeds and brush.

The sprayer has a 10-ft. fold-up boom equipped with four 30-in. long drop nozzles. The wings fold up for transport. There are two pumps and two tanks, allowing him to spray two different kinds of chemicals from either side of the boom. If he wants he can use a hand-held spray wand with one of the tanks. The entire unit mounts on a wooden pallet, allowing him to use a forklift to lift the unit into the back of the Kubota.

"It lets me get in and out of relatively tight spots, and with 4-WD and a low center of gravity it can go anywhere and crawl right up onto ditch banks," says Shambaugh. "The Kubota utility vehicle has more hauling capacity than an ATV, with enough room for two pumps and two tanks, and it has a foot-operated variable speed transmission so my hands are free to operate the spray wand. Another advantage is that it saves wear and tear on my pickup.

"I use it around my yard and along fence rows and roadsides. The drop nozzles reach



Teddy Shambaugh got this new Kubota 4-WD utility vehicle for his 50th wedding anniversary. He built a slide-in sprayer for it that he uses to control weeds and brush.



Sprayer's 10-ft. boom is equipped with four 30-in. long drop nozzles. The wings fold up manually for transport.

to within 18 in. of the ground and greatly reduce problems with spray drift."

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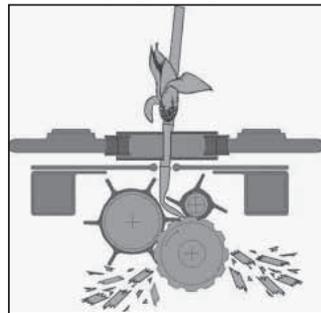
the best on the market for when they were made. Deere finally copied their design five or six years later.

My 1992 **Case IH** Maxxim 5250 tractor equipped with a reverser gear is a very handy loader tractor.

"My **Great Bend 770** front-end loader is well built and comes with a good manual that covers both installation and maintenance."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists **ColorBack** paint renewer from Apollo Sales. "The instruction manual is very poorly written. The company said ColorBack would work on Case IH tractors, but it didn't for us. In fact, it even ruined the good paint on our tractor. They said I used the product wrong and wouldn't refund my money, even though I followed all the instructions."

Harold Barton, Silver Lake, Minn.: Harold ran a 12-row 22-in. **Geringhoff** corn head over 1,000 acres last fall and says he couldn't have been more impressed. "I've been running self-propelled combines since 1961 and this is the most impressive header I've ever seen," says the 91-year-old Barton.



"It's got built-in stalk choppers so it eliminates a separate trip across the field to chop. It doesn't chop the stalks quite as close to the ground but it's pretty good.

"We mounted the header on our Case IH 2388 with rear wheel assist and harvested at speeds of 3.6 to 4 mph. It's a very aggressive header that does a great job bringing in the ears, although we put Corn Shields (which

Barton invented) at each end of the header. With the shields in place, you can go with the row or across the rows and still do a good job. They also make it possible to plant 15-in. rows and harvest with this header."

Barton says rear wheel assist is a must-have on today's combines. "If you can't afford rear wheel assist, you can't afford to farm," he notes.

David Fox, Edon, Ohio: "My 60 by 98-ft. **Morton** pole barn is my best buy. The building started leaking a little around a skylight, but the company came out and fixed it. No one was home when they came out, and they left me a message saying the south side of the roof was peeling slightly. They also listed a phone number for me to call. I thought maybe the problem was because I have 400 hogs in an outdoor feedlot that runs parallel to the building, but I guess the problem was due to some bad paint. Regardless, they replaced the entire roof at no charge. I'm really happy with the warranty this company offers."

Louis Kocou, Jr., Woodstock, Va.: "My **Paslode** cordless angled finish nailer is my best buy. I used it recently to do trim work on a new house that we built. It worked as advertised, without leaving even one 'hammer blossom' anywhere in the entire house. No problems of any kind. It's an excellent tool."

Dan Hill, Dixmont, Maine: "In FARM SHOW's Vol. 29, No. 1 issue you published a story about Ford pickups burning up. Two years ago I bought a 1996 Ford F-150 pickup from my son, who bought a new GM after testing and rejecting several Ford models. He had put about 100,000 miles on the Ford with few problems.

"From what I can determine, the pickups that have burned have an aluminum master cylinder with a plastic fluid reservoir. The faulty switch is at the top front of the master cylinder. It supplies power to the cruise control. The switch is closed until hydraulic pressure opens it and removes 12 volts from the

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