

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

loader with a joystick.”

Ambrose Beck, Goose Lake, Iowa: A **Bobcat 773** skid loader rates as Ambrose’s “best buy.” “I use it to do custom work, digging holes with a 9, 12, or 18-in. dia. auger, and it has performed exceptionally well. It has about 2,000 hours on it without even so much as an oil leak. I’d definitely buy another one. I also use it with a tree shear to cut trees up to 12 in. in diameter.

“My **DeWalt** cordless drill is my worst buy. I have to constantly replace the batteries. I’ve gone through three batteries and expect to go through more. I’ll never buy a DeWalt product again.”

Ed Hakes, Clarinda, Iowa: “I like my 2003 **Valtra 8550** tractor. This is my second 8550. I put about 1,200 hours every year on the first one and it has been absolutely trouble-free. My newest one has about 700 hours on it and the only problem is that the radio failed. This tractor is extremely fuel efficient with excellent torque.”

Shelly Mende, Faribault, Minn.: “Painting has always been a dreaded chore. I’ve tried to save money with cheaper paints, but I always end up having to go over with a second coat. I noticed a paint called **Kilz** at Wal-Mart that was guaranteed to cover in one coat. It was a little more money but I figured it would be worth the extra cost if it saved me time and extra paint. It worked great. I used



a pale green over brown, and nothing showed through. I got a durable, scrubable finish that dried to the touch in 2 hours. I like the plastic container, too. It has an easy-to-use screw-on cap and a pour spout that eliminates dripping down the side of the can. The spout also acts as a brush wipe, which works great so my 11-year-old daughter can help without making a mess. I’m sold on this product.”

John R. Clouser, Wolsey, S. Dak.: John’s pleased with his 2003 **Dodge Dakota** 4-door extended cab pickup with a V-8 engine. “It has a lot more room than our 1997 **Dodge Dakota** pickup equipped with a V-6 engine. It also performs better and is more fuel efficient.”

Randal Hatcher, Spanishburg, W. Va.: Randall likes his **Kobalt** socket tools. “These tools are well crafted and have an excellent finish. The sockets are very precise and the ratchets fit comfortably in one’s hand. In my opinion, these tool beat Sears Craftsman hands down.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his **Chicago Electric 170** welder and 4-in. grinder that he bought from Harbor Freight. “The welder was supposed to be shipped with gloves, helmet, and gas bottle but it arrived with none of those items. When I wrote the company, they sent me a small carbon dioxide bottle that was useless. Then six months after I bought the welder the gun went bad. I found out it was obsolete and that no parts for it were available. The grinder was even worse. I was able to use it for only 3 1/2 minutes before it burned out. My advice is to buy locally.”

Harvey Scherer, Graston, Minn.: “I use my 1984 **Allis Chalmers 6060** tractor with a 60 hp diesel engine to do hay work. It does a good job with our haybine and also with our big round baler. However, I wish it shifted easier. I also wish it had a swivel seat so it would be easier to look back.”

Emil Kalvoda, Mandan, N. Dak.: “My

2003 **Ford Focus** 4-door is an excellent car. It handles well, is fuel efficient, and has a lot of room inside considering how small it is. It’s the only car I’ve driven that I don’t hit my head every time I get in.”

Riley Budensiek, Zumbrota, Minn.: “My 1994 **Dodge 1500** pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine is my best buy. It has more than 319,000 miles on it and the only repairs have been for a transmission rebuild and some 4-WD work. I work at a construction site and use this pickup to carry a lot of big and heavy tools with no problems. I change oil every 3,000 miles and also add some fuel and oil additives. This pickup just keeps on chuggin’.”

William S. Fowler, Jamestown, Mo.: “My 2003 **New Holland TN75** is a good, medium range 4-WD tractor. My only complaint is that the cab could be slightly bigger.”

Edgar Hawker, Frederick, Md.: “My 2002 **Kinze 6-row, 3000 series** planter equipped with interplant row units is a best buy. It works good in both corn and beans, letting us plant no-till beans without having to buy a no-till drill. This planter is very well built.”

Ron and Jeanne Smeins, Helmsville, Montana: “We use our 2002 **Polaris Ranger 6** by 6 ATV here in the mountains all year long. It’s our best buy. During the summer we use it for pleasure riding on hundreds of miles of old logging roads. We also use it to pull logs and haul gravel. In general, we use it much like a pickup. During the winter we mount a 6-in. angled snow blade on it. Then we fill the box with rocks for weight and chain up all six wheels so we can push snow. We live a mile from the closest highway so we do a lot of snow plowing. It can really push the snow. No problems so far.

“Our worst buy is our **Hawk Brand** router table. For what it cost it has a lot of room for improvement.”

Scott Standish, Caledonia, Minn.: “I like **Sea Foam** fuel additive. I use it with several small 2-cycle and 4-cycle engines. This product costs only pennies a tank but, because of it, all my engines start whenever I need them.

“My 1995 **Dodge** pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine is my worst buy. The pickup has a lot of power and is fuel efficient. Too bad the automatic transmission and the front end can’t handle the weight or the power.”

Robert M. Fluegge, Jefferson City, Mo.: A 1977 **Deere 4430** tractor rates as Robert’s “best buy.” He bought it used in 1980. “The tractor has 8,432 hours on it but still doesn’t burn a drop of oil. It has never had an overhaul and still starts and runs well. This 4430 is pretty good just the way it was built back in 1977.”

Steve Kauth, Loyal, Wis.: Steve’s the satisfied owner of a 1999 **Case 1840** skid loader. “It’s a dependable machine and makes life on our farm much easier. It has saved us a lot of labor.

“My **Delaval/Harmony** claw for milk units is my worst buy. It works slow and ruins the ends of the cow’s teats. If you want to go broke fast, this product will do it for you.”

Junior Tevis, West Mansfield, Ohio: Junior likes his 2003 **Drill Doctor 500** precision drill bit sharpener (Dakota Sales, Wyndmere, N. Dak. ph 800 260-9944 or 701 439-2860). “I got it as a Christmas gift. The day after Christmas I used it to sharpen more than 100 drill bits. I went to Lowes and bought an extra chuck that lets me sharpen bits up to 3/4 inches in diameter. I’ve probably got at least 100 more bits to sharpen when time permits. I love it.”

“My 1993 **Ford F-250 4-WD** pickup is my worst buy. I bought it used when it was a year



The odometer on Mel Goguey’s Dodge 350 quit working when the pickup had 1,062,000 miles on it. He still uses it to pull two trailers at a time across the U.S.

1991 Dodge “Way Over” 1,000,000 Miles

“I’ve stopped being surprised at the high mileage on my 1991 Dodge 350 pickup,” says Mel Goguey. “The odometer gave up at 1,062,000 miles and I can’t even recall when exactly that was. I go all across the country delivering a machine for dismantling wood pallets. Not only does my pickup get me to where I’m going, but it also hauls horse and flatbed trailers on the return trips, sometimes two or three at a time.”

Besides running forever, the Dodge also takes very little maintenance. “So far I’ve only replaced the universal joints, a fan belt,

old and now it has about 93,000 miles. Two years ago both fuel tanks started leaking. The front tank still leaks. I used JB Weld to repair the back one. The bed is all rusted out, and a year ago the transmission went out. The truck is still in my shop with the transmission pulled, waiting on another one.”

“Two years ago both fuel tanks started leaking.”

Jim Nunn, Niangua, Mo.: “My 2002 **Sears Big Wheel** string trimmer is my worst buy. The problem is that the string lasts only about three minutes. Also, the plastic height plate below the string wore out and popped off even though I hadn’t used the trimmer very much.”

Clayton Matus, New London, Ohio: Clayton owns a 1998 **Chevrolet Silverado** crew cab dually pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter diesel engine. “I bought it used three years ago and it’s my worst buy. The fuel pump on this engine is a major problem. It has only about 80,000 miles on it but has already gone through six pumps. All of them were covered under warranty. The problem is there’s no warning when the fuel pump quits. As a result, I almost had an accident while passing another vehicle on a two-lane road. I called GM which turned out to be a big waste of time.”

Joe G. Eilert, Jewell, Kansas: “My 2000 **Sunflower 35-ft.** V-plow is my best buy. It was an unused model that I bought last year. It has seven 5-ft. blades on it as well as conservation treaders. I used the plow for the first time last year on unworked wheat stubble. The ground was so hard and dry that nothing else would penetrate it, but this plow performed flawlessly. We also used it last fall to apply 600 acres of anhydrous ammonia. This plow works great and fits terraces like a hand in a glove.

“My worst buy is my 2001 **New Holland 688** round baler. I traded a well worn 530 **Deere** baler for it. The **Deere** baler was reliable, but the **New Holland** machine had trouble from the start. The dealer and I tried to make it work for two years without success. We both became very frustrated. I had to use a loaner baler to make most of my hay. The dealer tried hard to solve the problem, but company support was bad. The dealer had all his mechanics on my farm at various

the injector line, two sets of break pads and the throttle linkage,” he says. “The only really expensive thing was a replacement of the entire exhaust system, which is really no big deal compared to the million or so miles it has traveled,” he notes.

“The pickup is a diesel and uses very little oil - about 2 quarts every 15,000 miles. The engine still runs great. I recommend Dodge pickups to everyone.”

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times. We finally started using parts from a burned-out salvaged machine just to get the machine to work. I recently traded it in for a **Deere 567** baler. No more **New Hollands** for me.”

Gene Pearson, Wichita, Kansas: A 2001 **Caterpillar 236** skid loader rates as Gene’s “best buy.” “It runs smooth and has plenty of power for doing small jobs. If it ever gets overloaded it diverts hydraulic pressure to avoid damaging the machine.

“I bought a used 1999 **Ford F-350** crew cab pickup with 353,000 miles. I’ve put about 10,000 miles on it and it hasn’t used any oil.

“My 1997 **Daewoo DSL 801** skid loader is my worst buy. It’s not a bad machine in most respects, but there’s absolutely no dealer support or parts availability. I replaced it with a **Caterpillar 236** skid loader and am pleased with it.”

James Rundus, Munden, Kansas: “I don’t think there’s a better combine for the money,” says James about his 1985 **Massey Ferguson 850** combine which he bought used when it was a couple years old. “The combine is equipped with a 24-ft. platform which it handles easily. I wouldn’t want a smaller one. I wish I could buy a new combine like this one.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his 1988 **Deere 4850 MFWD** tractor. “The problem is the radiator overheats. The company suggested I try a fan lock-up kit which I did. It helped a little, but not enough. I finally re-cored the radiator with a thicker core. Now the tractor runs a little if the radiator is perfectly clean, but the gauge runs right on the red line. In my opinion, **Deere** didn’t intend for you to pull this tractor to its capacity. Also, the filler pipe for adding hydraulic oil is at such an angle that you can’t use a funnel.”

Robert G. Yagel, Haughton, La.: A 1979 **Kubota 245** tractor equipped with a diesel engine rates as Robert’s “best buy.” “It can go slow enough to till yet it also has a road gear. The transmission has high and low range gears, with eight forward gears and two reverse.”

Charles Michaels, Fountain City, Wis.: Charles is the owner of a 2002 **Mantis** rototiller. “It’s small enough that I’m able to handle it easily yet it does a great job in my garden. However, it doesn’t dig up sod as well as I had hoped it would. The grass gets caught in the machine and plugs it up.”

Clyde Adams, Oakland, Miss.: “My 1995

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