

As a contractor, I use this tool almost every day. It's compact, durable, and powerful. Ergonomically, this tool fits my hand well. It has a trigger-activated spotlight that precisely illuminates the driver tip, which is a nice feature when working in dark cabinets, etc."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 2006 **DeWalt** laminate and trim router kit. "Right out of the box, the main base was 'out of square'. Bit changes are clumsy, and the depth control is hard to operate. I finally set this tool on a shelf and bought a **Bosch** Colt trim router, which I really like."

**Steve Kohlmeier, Princeton, Ind.:** Steve's satisfied with his **Kubota** BX24 tractor. "This is my fourth one, as I trade models every two years or so. I put about 400 trouble-free hrs. on them."

**Mike Jacobson, Audubon, Minn.:** "I like my 2010 **Cub Cadet** Z Force S zero-turn riding mower equipped with a 22 hp Kawasaki engine and a heavy-duty commercial deck. It's an incredible mowing machine; the only one that a beginner can handle on sidehills and ditches. Steering is done with a wheel instead of levers, which I like. No problems. It's the best mower I've ever operated and is priced much lower than the ones sold by big name companies."

**Raymond Akkerman, Harris, Iowa:** "I've put about 81,000 miles on my 2006 **Ford** F-150 pickup with no breakdowns. My 2011 **Ford** F-150 pickup has about 7,600 miles on it and it hasn't had any problems, either. It averages 21 1/2 to 23 mpg."

**Sawyer Lee Thome, Gordon, Neb.:** Sawyer nominates his 2003 **Deere** X585 4-WD riding mower equipped with a 54-in. deck as his "best buy". "We bought it used at an auction with 730 hrs. on it for \$5,000 and use it to mow our 3-acre yard. I like the 4-WD, power steering and hydrostatic transmission."

**Lewis E. Acker, Piedmont, Ala.:** "I think my 1980's **Deere** 4440 tractor is one of the best tractors Deere ever built. Routine maintenance is all it has ever needed."

**Tim Murphy, Grayling, Mich.:** "We replaced our 18-year-old Coleman furnace, which was still working fine, with a 95 percent efficient 2011 **Miller** LP furnace. We installed it last September and have already seen a dramatic reduction in propane use. We're very happy with it."

**Al Belzel, Lexington, Texas:** "Our 2009 **Kiotti** 30 hp, 4-WD utility loader tractor makes it a joy to do chores around our vegetable farm. We use it as a road grader,

from a veteran who has a joystick-controlled wheelchair. This is the fastest cutting and hardest working mower I've ever used. It works even better than the manufacturer claims. My son has limited use of both legs and one hand but has good use of one hand, so he can drive this mower.

"I bought a \$10 fan belt at **Tractor Supply Company** that was 1 in. too short, so I went back the next day to exchange the belt for the size I needed. They wouldn't accept the belt for exchange because I couldn't give them a phone number. The corporate policy is: no phone, no return. My policy now is: to avoid this company."

**John Wyatt, Osceola, Iowa:** "Our 2009 **Ford** Flex was a great car but it got totaled when a pickup ran a stop sign. We replaced it with a 2012 Flex that's equipped with the new energy-efficient EcoBoost engine, and it's a fantastic vehicle. Great mileage and with 365 hp it goes pretty fast for a station wagon. It's the most comfortable car we've ever owned."

**Salvador Martinez, Gibbon, Neb.:** "About 10 years ago, I bought a 1993 **Chevy** S-10 pickup with about 175,000 miles. It used one quart of oil about every 200 miles. I started using **Lucas** heavy-duty oil stabilizer and soon the engine began using less oil ([www.lucasoil.com](http://www.lucasoil.com)). I add the stabilizer with every oil change, and now the pickup uses only about one quart every 2,500 to 3,000 miles. It has about 266,000 miles on it. We drive it every day."

**Cornie Vanlant, Chandler, Minn.:** "Two years ago I bought a **Farmall** 80 front-wheel-assist tractor equipped with a 730 front-end loader and a cab, heater and air conditioning. It's a great tractor. Last year I put on 55 hrs. just scooping snow. I started farming with a **Farmall** Regular and will end my farming career with a **Farmall** 80."

**Maurice Masar, Orofino, Idaho:** He's pleased with his **DR** 18 1/2 hp brush cutter. "It just keeps going up and down our slopes cutting everything in sight. The attachments, generator and snowplow for it are easy to attach and remove. Maintenance is also easy."

**L. Don Shumaker, Cleveland, Ohio:** "I use a **Paselode** cordless framing nailer to repair wood fence and for other repair jobs around our farm. This nailer is tough, dependable and durable. It makes construction jobs easy and saves me a lot of time and energy on major projects."

**Gerald A. Haugland, Hampton, Iowa:** A 2001 **Dodge** Dakota 4-door, 4-WD pickup equipped with a V-8 Magnum engine rates as Gerald's "best buy". "I was told the transmission wouldn't be any good, and Consumer Reports magazine gave this pickup a bad report. However, we now have about 151,000 miles on ours and it runs great. No engine or transmission problems. The 4-WD is great in winter, and we love the ride and the performance of the V-8."

He's had problems with his early 1970's **New Holland** L225 skid loader. "Every time I turn around something else on it seems to go wrong. I had to install a new engine, overhaul the drive pump, put in new inner and outer wheel seals, replace the tires, and overhaul the bucket cylinders. It starts hard and replacement parts are expensive. It's hard to get in and out of, and the engine compartment is hard to get at with the loader arms down."

**Kevin Kaufman, Alexandria, Ky.:** "My 2006 **Kubota** BX1850 tractor runs great but it has a lot of plastic body parts that shake apart due to diesel 'rattle'. I've had to replace several headlight assemblies because of this rattle issue. I also had problems with a cooling fan for the hydrostatic transmission that's mounted on the driveshaft. When small

## His "Best Buys" Are Both Home-Built

John Cann built his own backhoe out of necessity when he needed to dig a drain for his basement. He needed a small rig because there were so many trees around his house, so he built a small backhoe to fit on the 3-pt. hitch of his 1954 NAA Ford Tractor.

He built the arms and bucket from scratch and added four pistons to operate it. The backhoe has a 12 to 15-ft. reach. It's powered by tractor hydraulics.

"It's not too big and folds up compactly," he adds.

He leaves it on the tractor nearly all the time to use around his Sydney, Nova Scotia, property. "The backhoe really makes the tractor worthwhile," Cann adds.

So does the dump box he built for his 1989 **Dodge** Ram diesel pickup. He bolted an angle iron frame to the truck bed and attached hydraulic cylinders to either side that lift and lower the 1/8-in. steel plate dump box, which he also built. He copied the design of a factory-built unit. The tailgate opens from the top or bottom.

Cann uses the truck to haul coal for heating fuel as well as sand and gravel, and firewood for his daughter. Cann appreciates the truck's history. It made three trips across Canada to Alaska and hauled seafood for years.



John Cann built this small backhoe to fit on the 3-pt. hitch of his 1954 Ford NAA.



He also built a handy dump box for his 1989 Dodge Ram diesel pickup.

"The backhoe and truck box are the most useful tools on my place," says Cann.

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twigs get up underneath the tractor the fan's plastic blades break off. I'm now on my fourth fan. To replace this \$6 fan you have to remove the tractor's motor mounts and pull the engine forward. The dealer charges more than \$1,000 to do this job.

"On the plus side, the tractor is built as strong as an ox and runs great."

**James Hicks, Williamsville, Mo.:** "My **Deere** 990 loader tractor sips fuel — extremely economical to operate. It starts immediately, even after sitting for several weeks in cold weather."

**Blaine Anderson, Beaver Crossing, Neb.:** "My 2011 **Ford** F-150 King Ranch is the quietest, best-riding pickup I've ever owned. I love the EcoBoost engine which gets about 19 mpg overall. It has a lot of torque and is like driving a high-speed diesel. On the highway it seems to just keep shoving me in the back, and will go well past 100 mph.

"I like **Deere** 8000 series tractors. I've owned an 8100 MFWD 8400T, 8320 MFWD, and now an 8295R MFWD. These tractors have a lot of power, good fuel economy, super cabs and a level of quality and sophistication second to none.

"I'm also pleased with the **Morton** buildings we've put up — a 54 by 99-ft. model in 1996 and a 54 by 75-ft. model in 2003. These buildings are just as tight and bright today as the day they were built. Super sliding door quality, too. Great service and construction."

**Timothy Stegman, Neche, N. Dak.:** "I use **Munkfors** sawblades on my homemade bandsaw mill. They provide long sawing life and multiple sharpenings ([www.munkforsagar.se](http://www.munkforsagar.se)). I also like dealing with **Coleman Sawmill Supply** (ph 812 865-4001; [indianaforestproducts.com](http://indianaforestproducts.com)). Both companies are easy to deal with and offer prompt service. I can saw boards to dime thickness if I need to."

**Robert Mertens, New Franken, Wis.:** He says his 2009 **Deere** X-300 garden tractor starts great no matter what the temperature is and has a lot of power. "I use a snowblower and mower deck with it. They both work great and are easy to change over."

**Ben Plummer, Buxton, Maine:** "My Husqvarna chainsaw quit working last fall.

In desperation I dug around and scrounged up my grandfather's old 1970 **Poulan** Super 33 chainsaw. He died almost 20 years ago, so this saw hadn't been used for decades. I replaced the fuel line and taped up the spark plug wire, and I was back in business. I used this saw all this winter and it has won me over. The 76cc motor has plenty of power with a simple design and a rugged build. It's also doing wonders for my upper body strength since it's a heavy little sucker.

"This saw was built before 'noise pollution' became an issue. It doesn't have a muffler on it, and was never designed to have one so when I'm out cutting wood the whole county knows it. I don't know why, but I like that. Kudos to Poulan for designing something that brings joy to the operator 40 years after it was purchased."

**Mel Bussell, Sedgwick, Kan.:** "I bought a **Mojack** EZ mower lift at Tractor Supply Co. It was priced right and works as advertised. It stores easily, makes maintenance easy, and should last a long time."

**Darwin Peterson, Alden, Iowa:** "Three years ago I bought a used **White** 6195 tractor equipped with an 18-speed Fendt transmission. About 1 1/2 years ago the transmission failed. I took the tractor to my local Agco dealer but they didn't want to work on the transmission, so we hauled it to a dealer who was a Fendt specialist. After eight months, the dealer informed me they couldn't get the parts they needed due to obsolescence, even though the tractor was built in the 1990's. I located the parts in Canada but at a cost of \$7,800. I'm still waiting to have the transmission repaired."

**Jerry Davis, Princeton, Minn.:** "Late last fall, after finding all 4 of my gopher traps plugged, I ordered 4 traps from Ken Sprick (ph 507 753-2337) whose "top trip" trap was featured in FARM SHOW (Vol. 35, No. 3). I caught gophers in all of them. Soon after, I put them away for the winter. Now I can't wait until spring."



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forklift, row tractor, front-end loader, a power source for splitting logs, raking hay and pulling wagons. It always starts right up and is easy on fuel and oil. Its all metal body construction makes it a good successor to our **Mahindra** 35 and an excellent companion to another bullet-proof tractor, our **Deere** 4020."

**Richard Schondelmayer, Fremont, Mich.:** "My dad and I purchased our **Wood-Mizer** sawmill used several years ago. The company trained us to operate the mill even though we bought it used. We've used it to mill wood for many projects for our several rental homes. We had a good time working on it together.

"My 2011 **Country Clipper** JAZee zero-turn riding mower has joystick steering, which I like (ph 800 344-8237; [www.countryclipper.com](http://www.countryclipper.com)). I found out about it