

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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Ted Sockaci, Fombell, Penn.: "My White 2-85 tractor works great with no problems. It's a rugged, reliable machine."

"My three **Stihl** chainsaws are all best buys."

"My **New Holland** 316 square baler and 648 'Silage Special' round baler are both best buys."

"I bought a used **White** 2-70 tractor at an auction with less than 500 hours, and it turned out to be my worst buy. The engine was junk - I broke two crankshafts within 1,000 hours of use. We've used Oliver tractors since 1948 with no problems with any of them. The White 2-70 is supposed to be identical to the Oliver 1455, but it's not. I guess that's why there are so many used 2-70's for sale at dealers."

Karl Weiss, Grunthal, Man.: Karl's impressed with the 2000 **Polaris** Sportsman 500 4-wheeler he bought used with about 5,500 miles on it. "The machine hadn't been maintained very well and needed a new CV boot and tie rods and had some electrical problems, but I was able to fix everything at very little cost. The engine and drivetrain work great. It doesn't burn any oil and is twice as fuel efficient as the one on my previous ATV. This machine pulls like a small tractor but also cruises down the road at 50 mph. It's the best ATV I've ever owned."



John Hartford, Vienna, W. Va.: "I'm well pleased with my **Porter Cable** 18-volt multi-pack tool kit. It hasn't let me down yet. It comes with two batteries so I never run out of power."

"My 2007 **Sears Craftsman** 46 cc chainsaw equipped with an 18-in. bar is my worst buy. The first hour a rod broke in the engine. It would've cost too much to repair so I junked it. I was very disappointed, to say the least."

Terry Gardner, Armada, Mich.: "The **Lil'House** outside wood heater I bought from Bradley Enterprises is my best buy (ph 417 581-7755; www.outsidewoodheater.com). I live in a 1,600 sq. ft., 2-story home that I



heat with propane. My fuel bill was averaging \$1,800 a year, so I bought this forced air outside wood heater.

"The **Emerald Ash Borer** has devastated Michigan's ash trees so I have plenty of firewood. My biggest problem now with this outside wood heater is that the house actually gets too hot, which is a nice problem to have. The unit was fairly easy to install and is very efficient. Once I get a good bed of coals I damper the air down so there's very little flame. I only have to add wood to the stove

twice a day, and I don't have to put much in at all when outside temperatures are in the 30's and 40's. The company is a pleasure to work with."

Mike Sinnott, Stratford, Ct.: "The set of cobalt twist drills I bought last year from **Northern Tool** is my best buy. I use these drills with cutting oil for threading pipe, and they cut through steel like there's no tomorrow. Forget titanium or high speed steel drills - I'll stick with cobalt."

Ken Marcotte, Rosemount, Minn.: Ken's the proud owner of a 2007 **Deere** 7930 tractor equipped with a model 746 front-end loader. "I bought this tractor equipped with Infinitely Variable Transmission (IVT) and Triple Link Suspension (TLS), a combination that has resulted in the best tractor I've ever operated. IVT has to be the best invention ever."

"This tractor is awesome when used with a grain cart, because it matches combine speeds perfectly and is extremely smooth when unloading into trucks. TLS improves the ride, especially with the loader on. The tractor has tremendous hydraulic flow and outstanding power bulge and, with IVT, the fuel usage has been outstanding for a 180 hp tractor. The tractor itself has been trouble-free."

On the negative side, he lists high pressure hose that he bought at **Northern Tool**. "The third time I used the hose it started leaking through the seam. When I tried to return the hose the company told me they only warranty pressure hoses for 30 days. It didn't matter that there was no physical damage to the hose. I find Northern products to be poor quality, and their customer service is even worse."

Dan Chapman, Fountain, Minn.: "My 1996 **Deere** LX188 riding mower equipped with a 17 hp Kawasaki twin-cylinder, liquid-cooled engine is my best buy. It still cuts grass as good as the first time I used it. No problems."

"My 2008 **AquaTherm** outdoor wood stove is awesome."

Keith L. Miller, New Sharon, Iowa: Keith likes his 2005 **Chevrolet** Silverado pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine, 4-speed automatic transmission, and high speed rear end. "It drives great and is fuel efficient and responsive."

Kyle Lindsey, Bloomfield, Ind.: Kyle's had "nothing but problems" with his 2005 **Cub Cadet** LT1042 riding mower equipped with a 42-in. deck. "It goes through two to three belts per season even though we don't have a huge yard and it only has a little more than 100 hours on it. I've had to take the mower in a number of times for new spindles and bearings, and other such problems. I won't buy a Cub Cadet again."

Ben Morris, Valdosta, Ga.: "My 1993 **Kubota** L2500 4-WD tractor, which I bought used five years ago, is my best buy. I use it around our farm with a finishing mower and for box blading work and hauling manure. It's one of the toughest tractors I've ever used and is easy to operate and maintain."

Gary Pennock, Carthage, N.Y.: "The best decision I ever made was when I signed up to become a member of the **Natural Foundation for Debt Management** or NFDm (ph 800 353-9890; www.nfdm.org). I had three credit cards with substantial balances on each. NFDm contacted the credit card companies and got them to lower the interest rate on each card."

"One card went down from 13.97 percent to 2 percent, and the other two cards went down from 25 percent to 15 percent. I signed up with them in July 2005. Now I have just one month left to pay on one card, and then all three cards will be paid off in full."

"If I hadn't worked with NFDm it would have taken me 238 months to pay off the

cards. With their help I was able to pay off the cards in only about 4 1/2 years. Every member gets a financial workbook which contains 12 quizzes and a 60-question final exam that covers three areas - money, debt, and credit."

Darold Courtney, Blanchard, Okla.: "My 2008 **Poulan** Wood Shark chainsaw equipped with a 14-in. bar is my best buy. It's a good, dependable saw that's cheap to operate. I thought enough of it to purchase one for The Sparrow's Nest Orphanage in Latvia. They're very happy with the saw as it's small and runs good on their high-priced gas. It's also easy to start despite their cold, damp climate."

Michael Harrison, Grosse Ile, Mich.: "I'm totally satisfied with my 2004 **New Holland** TC40 DA 4-WD tractor equipped with a hydrostatic drive transmission and a 16LA front-end loader. I used it to build 2 1/2 miles of trails, placing surplus soil removed from three ponds that were excavated by my Cat 215 DLC excavator. The Cat 215 excavator has 735 hours on it with no problems and is also a best buy."

Glen Olson, Dexter, Ky.: "My 2008 **Chevrolet** Colorado pickup equipped with a 2.9-liter, 4-cyl. engine is my worst buy. It replaced my 1995 Dodge Dakota pickup equipped with a 3.9-liter, V-6 engine that had about 230,000 miles on it. The Dakota model had great acceleration and got 27 mpg, but the Colorado model doesn't accelerate as well. Whenever I try to accelerate from a stop

"When I accelerate from a stop sign I feel like I have to get out and push."

sign I feel like I have to get out and push the vehicle along. Also, it gets only 22 mpg. I had hoped for better fuel efficiency than that."

Jay Gelm, Waynesburg, Penn.: Jay says his three **Massey Ferguson** 4-WD tractors are all "best buys". They include a 2006 model 491; a 1998 model 253; and a 2005 model 1428. "The 491 and 253 models always start without pre-heating down to 13 degrees Fahrenheit or so. I use the 1428 model as a riding mower only."

Temple Kazira, Pisgah, Ala.: "I'm well pleased with a synthetic 100:1 pre-mix 2-cycle oil called **Amsoil Saber Professional** (ph 800 956-5695; www.amsoil.com). This oil is specifically designed for lean mix ratios in 2-cycle engines found on chainsaws, lawn equipment, blowers, chop saws, pumps, and so forth. A rep in Oshkosh, Wis. told me about it three years ago. I own several 2-cycle engines, including one on a Stihl 025 chainsaw which recommends Stihl oil be mixed at a 50:1 ratio; a Shindawa leaf blower which recommends Shindawa oil mixed at a 50:1 ratio; and a Kawasaki 1975 Triaxl Bike which recommends a 20:1 mix. I also have two bicycles with Jiangdo Flying Horse engines which recommend a 25:1 oil mix, and a Rans S-4 airplane that uses Rotax 503 2-cycle Pennzoil engine oil mixed at a 50:1 ratio."

"With all these different oil mixes I had to keep several different gas cans in my shop. The rep from Amsoil sold me my first can of 100:1 pre-mix oil and told me to use it in all my machines. But that sounded strange so I started out slowly, testing the 100:1 pre-mix oil on the leaf blower first. I filled the tank and ran the blower at full throttle until it was empty, and it ran super good. Now I use this 100:1 pre-mix oil in all my 2-cycle engines,

and I keep just one 24-gal. gas can which makes life much simpler."

Tim Hanson, Indianapolis, Ind.: "I like my 2006 **White** Outdoor 54-in. riding mower equipped with a 22 hp Kohler engine. It has a lot of power and leaves my lawn looking better than ever."

"For more than 20 years I've been using **CRC 2-26**, a multi-purpose precision lubricant, penetrant and corrosion inhibitor (ph



800 272-4620; www.crcindustries.com). It's sold by many marine and boating supply outlets. I buy it in a 6-oz. aerosol can although it also comes in other size containers. It's recommended for use on electrical connectors, relays, circuit breakers, transformers, motors, generators, frozen joints, locks, hoists, etc. I find that it works great on any piece of equipment exposed to the weather. If a switch doesn't work, I just spray CRC into it and it cleans the switch contacts so they work again."

"It also works great for light bulbs that don't come on. I spray some on the bulb contacts and into the bulb socket. The lubricant cuts through corrosion so they work again. It's great stuff."

R.A. Mansfield, Bath, Maine: "I'm disappointed with the \$39.99 chain sharpener I bought at **Harbor Freight**. The motor arbor shifted after I had sharpened only five or six chains, allowing the end of the shaft to wear through the guard. It wore the shaft down so much that the nut will no longer hold the grinding wheel."

Elmer Pinkerton, Elmwood, Neb.: "I bought remote-controlled **Easy On Wireless Tail Lights** (ph 866 889-8386; www.easyontailights.com). These lights are powered by D-cell batteries and work well. However, I don't like how the lights are put together. You have to remove and replace 12 itty bitty bolts and nuts to change the batteries. For the \$300 I paid for the lights there should be an easier way to access the batteries."

"In an attempt to solve the problem I replaced the bolts and nuts with hex head self-threading screws, which helped, but there are still 12 of them."

Stephen Carpenter, Somerset, Ohio: "I like the idea behind the **Grain Grabbers** devices which have been featured in FARM SHOW (Clever-Tech, ph 319 827-1311). They clip onto feederhouse auger flighting to grab the stalks and pull them into the combine. Being cheap, I made my own by welding old sickle sections onto the auger. Works great. After two years of use not one has broken off."

Shane Olivas, Yakima, Wash.: Shane nominates his 1977 **Ford** F-100 2-WD pickup as his "best buy". "I bought it used 20 years ago, two weeks before my 16th birthday, with about 70,000 miles on it. Now it has more than 244,000 miles. The engine was overhauled at 150,000 miles and the transmission at 170,000 miles. Otherwise it has required only routine maintenance. It's now on its fifth set of tires, third alternator, fourth battery and third set of brakes."

Lon Moen, Odessa, Minn.: "I'm pleased with my **Deere** Z425 riding mower equipped with a 48-in. deck. It has a lot of power and is a reliable machine."

"My **Stihl** MS290 chainsaw is a best buy."