

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

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Steve Rodgers, Wellman, Iowa: “Last year I bought a 1988 Reese 6-ft. 9-in. drum mower. I had been frustrated with my sickle mower which tended to plug up, especially in thick stands of legumes. I wanted something faster and more reliable with faster drydown. I couldn’t justify a mower-conditioner but I was impressed with the speed of disc mowers. I observed, however, that disc mowers often have expensive drivetrain issues with bearings, gears, shafts, and leaky seals. With limited time and a tight budget, I want to be mowing and not fixing.

“The Reese mower has a simple belt drive. I was able to easily rebuild my machine with new belts, knives and common-size bearings at a reasonable cost. I also bought a new windrow spreader attachment through Tigerco, the Reese distributor, and like how it spreads mowed hay for faster drying (ph 800 432-4020; www.tigercoinc.com). The drum mower lets me mow at high speeds without plugging up, even in tough conditions.

“I worked for more than 12 years as an agricultural engineer designing farm machinery, and I can honestly say the Reese drum mower is among the most well thought-out,

after only two hours of use. I was fit to be tied.”

Randall D. Brooks, Peterstown, W. Va.: “My 2005 Polaris MV7 ATV handles great. It’s a military issue model that was sold to the public for one year. It has two fuel tanks, a winch on front and back, a 2-in. receiver hitch, and armored steel on the bottom and sides. It weighs about 1,200 lbs. and has handled anything that I hook onto it.”

Terry Saxton, Beaver Island, Mich.: “My White MTD 27-ton vertical/horizontal log splitter with a 5 1/2 hp Tecumseh engine is my best buy. It starts winter or summer with just one pull. One time an exhaust valve stuck after I had put three tablespoons full of Slick 50 in the motor oil. I drained the oil and replaced it with fresh oil, which solved the problem. No more Slick 50 for me.”

Emil E. Smith, Franklin, Wis.: Emil’s the satisfied owner of a Milwaukee 6390-20 heavy duty circular saw equipped with tilt lock. “This saw has a lot of power, handles smooth, and works hard. I’m more than happy with it.”

Brandon Pletcher, Pierceton, Ind.: “We like our two Kubota ZD28 zero turn riding mowers, which are both equipped with 28 hp diesel engines. One is a 2002 model with a 60-in. deck. It runs and starts right up with heat glow plugs and does a great job of mowing. It has required very few repairs, with the worst being a clogged fuel filter and a new battery. The 2006 model has a 72-in. deck with a fiberglass canopy and it works great, too. Both models are fuel efficient with minimal vibration. They just keep on going and hold their battery life, even through winter storage.”

Harold A. Sprague, Whitingham, Vermont: A Kubota 8450 4-WD tractor equipped with a 12-speed transmission rates as Harold’s “best buy”. “I’m surprised at how easily it starts. I do wish there was a little less difference in speed between the transmission’s high and low ranges. This tractor is easy on fuel.

“My 1985 Ford 5610 4-WD tractor has only about 2,100 hours on it but has a noisy rear end and the front-end shimmies badly.”

Jeff Kohnhofer, Lakeville, Minn.: Jeff and his brothers at Kohnhofer Farms are well-pleased with their Johnson Drainage Plow - a do-it-yourself, tractor-pulled tile plow (ph 319 885-4496; www.johnsondrainageplows.com). “This thing is a beast. After five years and more than 50 miles of tile, it still looks like new. We used it early



this spring and it pulled big chunks of frost out of the ground without missing a beat. Last year alone we put in 20 miles of tile, pulling the plow with our Deere 9420 tractor.

“We did a lot of research before buying this plow. When I compared the amount of steel in this plow to other plows, there was no comparison. And there’s not an ounce of wear on it at this point.

“We don’t use a laser leveler. In fact, everything we know about tiling we learned from Johnson Drainage Plow when we bought the plow. We use 4 and 5-in. dia. tile in our heavy clay soil.

“This spring, for the first time, we did a custom job with the plow. Our neighbor had a quote of \$15,000 for about 12,000 ft. of tile. We did the job for about 40 percent less and everyone was happy. We finished the job in about 10 hours.”

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

well constructed farm machines I’ve ever seen. My only regret is that I didn’t buy one much sooner.”

P. J. Ranck, Heath, Ohio: “My Jitterbug cell phone is my best buy. My wife has a Verizon phone and contract and we thought it was time that I had a cell phone, thinking I could get on her hours for very little cost. Not so. We found the Jitterbug, and pay only \$15 a month with all the minutes I need. Even better than the price is the simplicity of the phone’s operation. Also, it has better coverage than Verizon.”

Mike Knodell, Fisk, Mo.: David’s impressed with his 2005 Ford F-150 Lariat Supercrew pickup. “Three years, 98,000 miles, and no repairs of any kind. The 5.4-liter engine is by far the smoothest engine I’ve ever owned and has plenty of torque at any rpm’s. The cab is so much quieter than the competition that it’s almost embarrassing. The engineering and quality of this vehicle is outstanding.”

Bill Zalesky, Wilber, Neb.: He likes his 1997 Dodge 3500 dually flatbed pickup equipped with a diesel engine and 5-speed transmission. “I bought this pickup used with about 200,000 miles on it. I put it through an oil analysis program, and every time I have the oil changed they tell me to add 500 miles onto the next oil change interval. Now I’m up to changing the oil every 9,500 miles but it still doesn’t use any oil. This pickup does more than I ever imagined.”

On the “worst buy” list is “anything that’s made in China. If it’s electrical, it burns out. If it’s metal, it stretches, bends, or breaks after only one or two uses. I won’t buy China-made products any more. My last experience was with a no. 50 sprocket on my silage cutter. It took two hours to take the sprocket apart, and 1 1/2 hours to put it back together. Then all the teeth on the sprocket bent back

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy

Send your nominations to:
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the survey form on our website at
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