

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

lbs. of dense freight behind the rear wheel wells. Try that with a 1/2-ton pickup from any of the Big Three auto makers.

"When my first pickup had about 140,000 miles on it I got a letter from Toyota saying they knew I was the second owner of the truck, even though I had never contacted them for anything. They explained that during that period of manufacture they got a shipment of defective valve seats from their supplier, and that if I had any trouble with valve leakage I should take it in to the nearest dealer and it would be repaired. The pickup did develop a leaky valve shortly thereafter, and a remanufactured head was installed by a dealer at no cost. My five kids and their families also drive Toyotas.

"My 1988 **Arts-Way** belly-mounted mower is a best buy (Armstrong, Iowa ph 712 864-3131; www.artsway-mfg.com). The blades have been replaced only once, and all the belts are original. No repairs have been needed. I use it to mow a 4-acre yard."

Don Peregrine, Fullerton, Neb.: "My 2004 **Honda** Rubicon 4-wheeler has more than 11,000 miles on it. I service it at regular intervals and it just keeps on running. It has required very few repairs.

"My 2001 **Polaris** 4-wheeler has about 4,000 miles, but I've already had to spend more than \$2,000 on repairs to the slip clutch, belt drive, brakes and so forth."

Larry Moss, Paris, Ill.: "My 2008 **Case IH** 7010 combine equipped with a 36-ft. draper header has great capacity, is easy to operate, and the dealer service has been excellent."

James J. Newell, Jonesville, Mich.: "I'm happy with my two **Homelite** chainsaws. I bought a model 150 automatic in 1971 and have used it to cut my winter's supply of wood every year since 1979. It has required only minor repairs like the spark plugs, clutch, bar and chain. I still use this chainsaw every year. I bought a Super XL-AO model in 1982 and use it to cut larger trees. It works great, too."

Donna Johnson, Bellingham, Mass.: "I've had success with **Victor** fly traps/bait (AG Organics, Prosper, Texas ph 972 347-3330; www.agorganics.com). In my opinion it's the best fly bait on the market."

Dale Parker, Buckeye, Arizona: "My best buy is my **Drill Doctor** drill bit sharpener. It performs exactly as advertised and is quick and easy to use. It has saved me a great deal of time and aggravation."

On the negative side, he lists his 2006 **John Deere** 345 loader tractor with backhoe. "Already this tractor has had a blown head gasket, two bad injectors, a split radiator tank, a blown hydraulic hose, and a leaking rear main seal. Three of the backhoe cylinders failed within the first 20 hours of operation."

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eration. I've had to replace the loader control valve, hoses and quick couplers due to leaks. The valve rockers wore out and new bushings had to be installed. The dealer has been fairly helpful, but this has been an expensive 'cheap' tractor."

Charles Brasfield, Jr., Vicksburg, Miss.: Charles is the satisfied owner of a 2008

Stealth 4-WD electric utility vehicle (West Monroe, La. ph 318 397-2588; www.stealth4x4.com). "This electric utility vehicle is well made and the company is very responsive to my questions. It has great utility and traction and runs quiet, and there's no fuel to pour, spill, or smell. My wife uses



it for feeding horses and doing chores. I use it for hunting as well as doing chores around our small farm."

Dickerson B. Hawkins, Gillsville, Ga.: "I like my **New Holland** TC30 tractor. The fuel gauge on it went out, but my dealer fixed it promptly.

"I'm also happy with my **Rhino** rotary mower and **Rhino** 5-ft. finish mower."

Doug Dewing, Grantsburg, Wis.: "My 2002 **Vermeer** 554XL round baler makes 4 by 5 1/2-ft. bales and is easy to operate. No problems. The bale size works well for us, as we sell a lot of horse hay and the bales fit comfortably in back of a 1/2-ton shortbed pickup. With a 4-ft. wide bale I can haul several on a trailer without being overwidth."

Dean Hertzler, Veteran, Wyoming: "My five corded **Milwaukee** tools are all best buys. They include three hammer drills, a shear, and a screwdriver. The drills have keyed chucks. All these tools have plenty of power. I believe in paying for top quality tools that last.

"The **Titan** 18.4 by 26-in. turf tires on my 2006 **New Holland** 3055 windrower have problems. The sidewalls have split in two places, but the company won't warranty their tires for sidewall splits. The cost to replace one tire is more than \$800. I'd like to buy a Firestone tire to replace it, but no two manufacturers make their tires the same dimensions, even though the tires are all called 18.4 by 26's."

Myron Bryant, Mills, Wyoming: Myron nominates his 2003 **Chevrolet** 2500 series pickup equipped with a Duramax engine as his "best buy". "This trouble-free truck rides and drives like a Cadillac. I'm well pleased with it."

Greg Kropf, Westphalia, Kansas: "We're well pleased with our 2008 **H&S** high capacity hay rake. It's built heavy and does a good job of keeping the rake wheels in contact with the ground. We were advised to buy the 14-wheel version instead of the 12-wheel version because it has a heavier frame. It's the only rake I've owned where the center kicker wheels actually do any good.

"We bought an **ETQ** 1,000-watt portable generator from Northern Hydraulics and like it a lot. I paid \$100 for it and thought I'd probably be able to use it for about six months before it would be used up. However, I've used it for more than a year now and it still works great. It's advertised to go 4 1/2 hours per gallon of fuel, but it does better than that."

Frank Weisbecker, Pennsburg, Penn.: "I'm happy with my **Troy-Bilt** 4-cycle gas-powered weed trimmer. It eliminates the need to mix gas and oil, is lightweight, and starts easy. By using large diameter string I'm able to destroy large, thick weeds."

Steve Curtiss, Hood River, Oregon: Steve's satisfied with his **Kubota** L3400 34

They Like Their "Cover Crop Roller"

Organic dairy producers Miller and Sons of Columbus, Wis., are well pleased with their new no-till roller developed by the Rodale Institute and manufactured by I and J Mfg. Co., Gap, Penn.

The 15-ft. wide "Cover Crop Roller" mounts on a front 3-pt. hitch. The roller flattens the cover crop without cutting or uprooting it. Within three weeks or so, the rolled cover crop dries out, forming a mat that retains moisture and prevents weed growth. The roller can be filled with water to provide extra weight, but the Millers have found it unnecessary to do that.

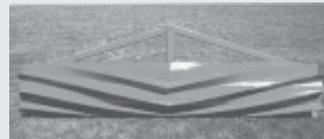
The Millers operate an organic dairy farm with some 320 cows and started using the Rodale no-till roller in 2006. They've been working with the University of Wisconsin on how to best use the roller. They farm about 1,600 acres, all of it in a crop rotation that includes corn followed by a cover crop of rye, which is no-tilled with the cover crop roller as soybeans are planted, then back to corn, followed by small grains (oats or spelt), then alfalfa. The Millers always have 450 acres of alfalfa.

When the 4-ft. tall cover crop of rye is headed out, they roll it down and plant beans. This results in about 4 in. of mulch. There's almost no foxtail, and the field is 90 percent perfectly clean.

According to company literature, the goal of the Cover Crop Roller is not to cut the



Photo shows roller knocking down a 4-ft. tall cover crop with a Deere no-till drill hooked on behind.



The 15-ft. wide roller is designed to crimp plant stems and lay them flat.

stems but to crimp them and lay them flat. The key is to wait until the cover crop reaches full flowering. If you do it before, the plant is still in a vegetative growth stage and will bounce back green and vigorous, but if you get it after this point it will dry and die.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, R and G Miller and Sons, 1762 County V, Columbus, Wis. 53925 (ph 608 335-4336) or I & J Mfg., 5302 Amish Road, Gap, Penn. 17527 (ph 717 442-9451).

hp tractor equipped with a hydrostatic transmission and front-end loader. "This tractor has a low center of gravity so it's easy to get on and off. It has a positive pto to drive implements, the 3-pt. lift arms are stable without being sloppy, and the loader digs well. The tractor has excellent safety equipment, and the rollbar folds down so it can get into a low shed. It's reasonably fuel efficient and gets about 18 hours per tankful of fuel."

Glen Pinley, Ada, Okla.: "My 2004 **Ford** F-350 diesel pickup is my worst buy. An engine rod went through the side at about 11,000 miles, the transmission had to be replaced at about 29,000 miles, and the turbo changed at 43,936 miles. The truck quit running on the highway at 44,200 miles, and the high pressure oil pump had to be replaced. This pickup had to go back to the dealer more than 10 times in three years. Finally I traded it for a 2008 **Ford** F-250 diesel model. No problems so far."

Charles N. Wells, Sturgis, Ky.: "We like our 2008 **Deere** Gator. It's equipped with an optional adjustable seat which comes in handy for my shorter wife, and an electric dump bed. This utility vehicle does exactly what it's supposed to do. We use it all over our farm and yard, even though it was originally purchased by my wife for 'house keeping' duties. It has a low bed height which makes loading stuff easy and also provides stability on hilly terrain. The differential lock provides just enough extra traction to get through muddy places.

"This vehicle is easy to service at home and is comfortable to get in and out of for us 'boomers'. It replaced my wife's 1985 **Honda** 250 Big Red. The Honda was also a best buy.

"We've also used the Gator to spray fence rows instead of a 4-wheeler. It's much easier on the spray hand. If we need to get into tight places we still have a 4-wheeler and the Honda for that, but 99 percent of the time it's the Gator that does the work on our farm."

Gloria Ann Baich, Alder Flats, Alberta: "My **Honda** 550 rototiller is my worst buy. I paid \$1,400 for it. The machine starts fine

but puts me through a horrendous workout. It wants to dig down into the ground rather than across it, and then it gets higher centered."

James Sheedy, Sr., Reisterstown, Md.: "I like my **Little Giant** ladder system (ph 800 453-1192; www.littlegiantladder.com). This adjustable extension/step ladder came with a video showing how to use it. Equipped with accessories, this ladder can be used wherever the surface isn't level. It has a platform that's movable and sure beats standing on a rung."

Gary Lake, Front Royal, Va.: "It runs and handles great and has a lot of power," says Gary, pleased with his 2006 **New Holland** TL 100A 2-WD tractor. "It's equipped with a cab, heater, and air conditioning. We use it mainly with a round baler.

"My 2000 **Belarus** 4-WD tractor equipped with a cab and front-end loader is my worst buy. It has two solid oil lines that come together in front of the engine and are connected by a 6-in. length of rubber hose. Unfortunately, the hose blew a hole and all the engine oil ran out, causing the engine to lock up. It happened at 670 hours."

James Rodlund, Stillwater, Minn.: "My best buy is a wood floor nailer and stapler that I bought at **Harbor Freight**. I had to lay about 700 sq. ft. of hickory wood flooring in my hallway, kitchen, and family room. This tool worked beyond my expectations, and it cost only about one third as much as other floor nailers that I looked at."

Jimmy Cobb, Andalusia, Alabama: "My 1998 **Deere** 4500 tractor is my best buy. It has more than 1,200 hours, yet I've only spent about \$100 on it other than regular maintenance."

Dana Davis, Sequim, Wash.: "I like my **Pedee Jeans** (Doug and Elaine Haga, Monmouth, Oregon ph 503 838-5955). These durable, handmade jeans are designed to last twice as long as regular commercial jeans, thanks to their lock stitch construction and reinforced stress areas.

"My **Wesco** work boots are also a best buy. "And my 1991 **Dodge** diesel pickup has (Continued on next page)