

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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that I own, I decided to put that money toward a car payment instead of to foreign-controlled oil companies. I also invested in a 'grease car conversion' so that I can burn vegetable oil part of the time.

"I'm not impressed with the dye detection kit I bought from NAPA. It's supposed to detect leaks in a vehicle's air conditioning system. However, I found that it clogged the vehicle's air conditioning system and also contaminated it."

**Victor Rankoski, Saskatoon, Sask.:** "The 3-cyl. engine on my Deere 5320 tractor is real easy on fuel. I sell hay which I have to haul over a lot of hills, four loads a day. I had

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been using a Deere 5400 tractor which used to burn a full tank of fuel every day. The 5320 does the same work on only a half tank of fuel."

**Gary Thompson, Preston, Mo.:** "Our 2007 Volkswagen Rabbit rides like a Cadillac, runs great, and gets about 30 mpg. It has more than 30,000 miles on it. I'm 6 ft. tall and weigh 300 lbs. so I really appreciate that this car has more room in the front seat than my 2001 Dodge full-size 1/2-ton pickup. No problems.

"Our worst buy was our 2007 Polaris XP side-by-side 4-wheeler ATV equipped with a 700 cc engine. It rode and ran great but required a lot of expensive repairs. In less than six months we had to replace drive belts three different times at a cost of \$180 apiece. About six months ago we got smart and traded it for a 2008 Arctic Cat Prowler 700 cc side by side ATV. We never replaced a single belt."

**Dave Farrert, Grasswood, Sask.:** A backup camera sold by Virtual Reality Video Labs rates as Dave's "best buy" ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). "It was easy to install on my truck and makes parking and trailer hookups a lot easier. Also, I feel safer backing up in our yard when grandchildren are visiting. I've seen this camera on sale for less than \$80. It's a great product for convenience and safety."

**David Shelton, Mt. Sherman, Ky.:** "I bought a Garmin C330 Street Pilot GPS system for my car in 2007, but so far it's been pretty much useless. It's supposed to take the shortest route but it actually takes longer. It doesn't even show my own address. I usually turn it off after five miles or so."

**John English, Bryon, Ohio:** "My Woods front-cut riding mower has reduced my mowing time by half. I can mow under bushes and around trees without having to do any trimming later on.

"My 1993 Mitsubishi 4-WD tractor is my worst buy. The center broke out of one of the front wheels and it took three months to replace it. Then the universal joint broke and I couldn't get a replacement. Also, it was hard to start during the winter. Someone came along and made an offer to buy it, which I took. He was happy and I was happy. I'll never buy a Japanese-made tractor again."

**Donald McCoach, Hubbardsville, N.Y.:** Donald nominates his 2007 Reese 3100 disc mower as his "best buy". "This mower does a great job and is belt-driven so there aren't any gearboxes to worry about. It mows faster and cleaner than my old New Holland 488 model. And because it's a disc mower there are no sickle sections that have to be con-

stantly replaced. The company just needs more U.S. dealers."

**Mike Owens, Holloway, Minn.:** Mike's impressed with his Soil Warrior strip-till machine (ph 507 645-2268; [www.soilwarrior.com](http://www.soilwarrior.com)). I've tried other strip-till equipment in the past, but they couldn't get adequate penetration in hard soil and wouldn't go through heavy residue like this model. It's well built, and I can use it during either the fall or spring without having to worry if it will work."

**Ron Tyler, Union City, Mich.:** "My 1990 Dodge 2500 4-WD diesel pickup is fuel efficient and has more than 144,000 miles. It seems like it will run forever."

**K. Harold Martin, McCook, Neb.:** "I'm impressed with my 1998 Chevrolet S-10 pickup equipped with a 4-cyl. engine and 5-speed transmission. It gets more than 30 mpg on the highway and about 27 mpg with general driving. This pickup has more than 148,000 miles on it but still runs great and has been trouble-free. It has plenty of power and is a far better pickup than the Ford Rangers I've owned in the past. Also, it has a comfortable seat."

On the minus side, he lists his Maytag stove and refrigerator. "This company used to be known for its high quality products, but in my opinion that quality isn't there any more. The refrigerator freezes our produce, yet where I keep milk on the top shelf it's 40 degrees. I have to turn up the freezer thermostat all the way in order to keep ice cream hard. The refrigerator has required many service calls."

**Greg Key, Arab, Alabama:** Greg's happy with his 2006 Dodge Ram 1500 4-door pickup equipped with a 4.7-liter engine and 6-speed manual transmission. "It averages 20 mpg on the highway and has more than 37,000 miles with no problems."

**Michael Nadon, Spruce Grove, Alberta:** "The DeWalt reciprocating saw that I bought several years ago has saved me hours of hard work cutting or demolishing almost any kind of material. Many different blades are available, making it a diverse and reliable tool."

**Ray Alexander:** Ray nominates his Lincoln grease gun as his "worst buy". "I always used to buy \$20 grease guns for use on my farm. They would eventually give out and then I'd have to buy another one. So the last time I needed a grease gun, I asked the store for their best gun and they sold me a Lincoln. I figured it would probably be the last grease gun I'd ever have to buy because it cost 2 1/2 times more than other brands."

"The gun lasted just one season and during that time I had a terrible time getting it to actually pump out grease, as it seemed to be constantly airlocked. When it got to the point where it wouldn't work at all, I was actually kind of glad. Good riddance. Now I'm back to buying \$20 grease guns and I'm happy about it. Lesson learned."

**Jack Gordon, Baldur, Manitoba:** "I like my Deutz tractors, which include 100-06 and 130-06 models built in the 1970's. They're good, solid machines that are easy to repair. I bought two extra Deutz models to use for spare parts. These tractors have the most fuel efficient engines that I know of. They have a 16-speed transmission with a creeper gear so there's a better gear selection than any other tractor of that age."

**Stan Pryzner, Markerville, Alberta:** "In 1995 I bought a used Deere 2750 tractor equipped with a 75 hp engine that had 3,700 hours on it. Over the years I've had nothing but problems with this tractor. Little things like the ignition not working after shutting off the engine, and the alternator not charging after starting the engine."

**Kent Sundling (kent@mr.truck.com):** The GOWELD is a really versatile and very portable welder. I've used it to work on a horse trailer along the side of the road using argon gas and regular lead acid battery power. You can even use truck or car batteries for power. Just disconnect them from the vehicle, and hook cables to the GOWELD in series.

"The welder has proven itself under combat situations in Iraq, where its compact size lets it be carried in battle ready vehicles. The handheld unit holds the motor, drive assembly, trigger, micro switch, gas valve, circuit board, even the wire spool in the handle. Large knobs control voltage and wire speeds of 50 to 1,000 inches per minute.

"Car batteries can be used, but deep cycle batteries will give you up to 20 minutes of welding between charges. The welder has built-in battery protection with a monitor that will automatically turn off the circuit to protect the battery from too deep a discharge.

"We've welded aluminum, but the GOWELD will also work with steel, stainless and hardfacing, reverse or straight polarity. The gun handle holds a 2-lb. spool of either 0.023 or 0.045 diameter wire. You don't even need argon gas if you use coated wire.

"The worst problem occurred at 6,553 hours when the transmission oil seal went out and had to be replaced. Oil was leaking on the ground. About 1,400 hours later the same problem happened again, and this time I had the tractor repaired at a different shop. That was last August. Last March - about 63 hours later - the seal went out again. Three repair jobs cost me a total of about \$12,000. As a result, I traded the tractor off on a newer Deere 6400 model."

**Hans Van Blyderveen, Harley, Ontario:** Hans is impressed with his two Honda GX 120 gas engines. "I bought the first engine to power a Little Giant elevator, which we use to load about 230,000 lbs. of juice apples into semi trailer trucks. I liked it so much that I bought a second engine to repower a BCS walk-behind rototiller which we use in our vegetable fields. The rototiller dates back to 1978 and originally had an 8 hp Acme engine. We grow about eight acres of fresh market vegetables and also have a tree nursery which we keep clean with the tiller."

**Ken Edwicker, Dunnville, Ontario:** Ken's impressed with the Homelite XL automatic chainsaw he purchased in 1972 for \$260. "It's a good saw. The automatic oiler no longer works so we just use the manual oiler. It now has an electronic ignition and has gone through several new bars and a lot of new chains. We usually sharpen the chain ourselves and file off the risers on a regular basis, every third to fourth sharpening. It's a great saw."

**Ivan E. J. Strain, Boissevain, Manitoba:** "My Polaris Sportsman 400 4-wheeler is a fantastic machine. It can go through any terrain."

**Darren Hum, Warburg, Alberta:** Darren's the proud owner of a 2008 Hypertherm Powermax 1250 plasma cutter. "I used it to cut out thin pieces of metal on a tree spade and then weld in new, thicker steel. The pieces I was cutting were only 3/8 in. thick, but this plasma cutter could cut them faster than I could control the torch. It'll cut 7/8-in. thick metal at 20 inches per minute and is able to cut up to 1 1/2-in. thick metal. I'm 100 percent happy with it, because now I can cut material in only about 1/8 of the time it used to take with an oxygen and acetylene torch. And there's no worry about heat warping the material. It'll also cut through aluminum and stainless steel."

**Bart Vanderwel, Bow Island, Alberta:** "My 1983 Yamaha 225 4-wheeler ATV is



GOWELD handheld welder works great under a wide variety of conditions, says Kent Sundling.

You can also get an adapter to use on 110-volt current in your shop or garage. A kit with GOWELD and all accessories is available for \$795 at [www.goweld.com](http://www.goweld.com)."

my best buy. I bought it used at an auction in 1992 for \$800. It always starts easy and runs great. I change the oil every two years. The last three years our kids have been using it. It has never required any repairs until last year when it was 24 years old. It got two new rear tires and a new muffler, and the seat was recovered by a local leather shop. This machine still runs great."

**Ben James, Jacksonville, Florida:** "It's a versatile, tough ATV. No problems so far," says Ben about his 2006 Max 6-WD all-terrain vehicle (Recreative Industries, [maxatv.com](http://maxatv.com)). "This ATV will go anywhere and is even amphibious. It drives like a little tank."

**Robert Musgrave, Burlington, Wis.:** "I've had good luck with a fuel stabilizer marketed by Briggs & Stratton that will work in any small engine. It used to be called Fuel Fresh but now it's called Fresh Start. Follow the directions on the bottle - there are ratios for everyday use and also for long term storage."

**Charles Hewitt, Owasso, Mich.:** "I like my 2006 Cub Cadet 1550 riding mower equipped with a 50-in. deck. It does a nice job of mowing grass, handles well, and starts good.

"My 2004 Dodge 2500 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine is a best buy. I've owned several pickups over the years, but this is the first one that has been trouble-free. It's fuel efficient and I love to drive it.

"I've had problems with my 2000 GMC pickup. Both the engine and transmission went bad. Also, the front end went bad with less than 10,000 miles on it. It gets only 6 mpg. No more GM products for me."

**George Molby, Pasadena, Md.:** "My 7 hp DR commercial leaf and lawn vacuum is a real time saver and is my best buy. I have two acres of oak leaves to remove every fall, and in the past I spent more time traveling and emptying my little 'two-bagger' than I did vacuuming up the leaves. This machine mulches the leaves up fine, and it has 315 gallons of capacity so I can remove all the leaves in just two passes. It's especially convenient for me because I'm semi paraplegic. I made some modifications to my lawn and garden tractor to suit my needs, and the DR-Vac made everything a whole lot easier and more convenient."

**Anthony Thiel, Boston, N.Y.:** "I bought a Redman standup wheelchair in January,