

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
**FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029,
Lakeville, Minn. 55044, or use
the survey form on our website at
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Harold Hamilton, Eagleville, Mo.: “In reference to Gary Alford’s statements in a recent issue about poor starting problems with his 2005 HPX 4-WD Deere Gator, I can say I had the same disturbing problem with my 05 HPX Gator. When I would shut it off for 15 minutes on a 90 degree day, I’d have to choke it to death to restart it.

“After two visits to the dealer with this problem, we finally found a solution. We traded it in for a diesel Gator which we are more than pleased with. It starts great and uses only half as much fuel as the gas model.

“One problem: It should have power steering because it steers hard. I have a Deere diesel lawn tractor with power steering so if they can put a unit on there, they should be able to add it to the Gator.”

J.O. Rogers, Kemp, Texas: “My Kubota BX 1500 sub-compact tractor does a great job cutting grass. It works about 75 percent as fast as a zero turn mower but is much more versatile. It has a 3-pt. hitch so I can use it with a tiller, blade, or a rough cut Bush Hog. Also, it can mow in muddy conditions without getting stuck or leaving wheel ruts like a zero turn mower.”

On the negative side, he lists drills and drill

F.D. Oakes Jr., Bowdoinham, Maine: “My 2006 Shindaiwa chainsaw is my best buy. It’s advertised as an arborist’s saw because the operator’s handle is over the power head rather than at the end. This saw has great balance and is less tiring to operate on the shoulders and back because the weight is closer to the body. It’s an excellent saw for limbing. It doesn’t leak fuel or bar oil when it’s stored or carried in the back of a car. It’s more expensive than other saws but has never been in the shop.”

Hermann Weber, Attica, N.Y.: “I process used vegetable oil in my FuelMeister biofuel system (ph 866 636-6130; www.fuelmeister.com) to turn it into diesel fuel, which I use to power my truck and tractor during the summer and my home furnace during the winter.”

Richard Vracar, Monticello, Florida: “My 2000 Dodge 1500 4-WD Quad-Cab pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine is my best buy. It had about 142,000 miles on it when I finally traded it in. I replaced the brake pads and rotors at about 100,000 miles, changed the oil and filter at 15,000-mile intervals, and changed the spark plugs twice. I changed the spark plug wires once and cleaned the pickup’s K&N air filter at 60,000 and 120,000 miles. That’s all it ever needed.”

M.Q. Dunlap, Ozark, Alabama: “My 1981 Chevrolet Luv pickup equipped with an Isuzu diesel engine is my best buy. I’ve driven this truck since 1984 and it still gets more than 40 mpg with no engine problems.”

George Hydrick, Utopia, Texas: “Our 2002 Ford F-350 4-WD pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter diesel engine is our best buy. It has custom toolboxes that replace the original bed (Manning Equipment, Lytle, Texas ph 214 649-7438). This pickup has about 200,000 miles on it but still runs as good as when I bought it. The toolboxes have paid for themselves just by keeping my tools in one place. No more searching in the bottom of a toolbox for tools.”

Roger Skow, Dafter, Mich.: Roger says the two Chicago Electric 3 hp electric motors he purchased from Harbor Freight Tools are his “worst buys”. “One motor arced and shorted out on the initial start. The second motor ran for only one hour before the windings melted and shorted out.”

Richard Kruse, Indianapolis, Ind.: A 2002 Chevrolet Avalanche rates as Richard’s “best buy”. “It has about 140,000 miles on it and only the brakes and tires have been repaired or replaced. I can drive to the field or church in comfort.

“My Deere 250 skid loader is my worst buy. It has had hydraulic hoses and pump problems with fewer than 500 hours. The engine and other components work fine but the hydraulic problems are costly.”

Chester Palmer, Miami, Okla.: Chester’s pleased with his 2003 GM Scottsdale 3500 pickup equipped with a Duramax diesel engine and Allison automatic transmission. “This is the quietest, easiest riding pickup I’ve driven in years. It has all the power I need to pull my 7 and 20-ft. trailers even when they’re loaded. It starts great in cold weather and performs well in the hottest weather. It gets only about 11 mpg which isn’t good enough, but in every other way it’s a great pickup.”

Bart Buehler, Nampa, Idaho: “My Net 10 prepaid cell phone is my worst buy. This is the same company as TracFone. Activation of this phone and later adding air time is a big hassle. Activation has to be done via a landline phone so they have a name and location. As a result, you’re less anonymous than you might think.”

Sherwood Botsford, Warburg, Alberta: “While it’s way too soon to tell how well it will work, I’ve just finished putting up a Koender windmill for aerating my pond. The

bits made in China. “If I buy a Chinese tool it’s with the idea that it’s a one-time use disposable tool. If the tool lasts any longer than that it’s a pleasant surprise.”

Lowell C. Lawler, Clare, Iowa: “I’m impressed with my Dickey-john mini GAC plus battery-powered, handheld moisture tester. It’s the most accurate portable moisture tester I’ve ever seen and is advertised to have ‘grain trade’ accuracy. Every time we checked this unit it was never more than three tenths of a point off from the readings on a commercial tester.

“My 1980 Kinze 800-bu. grain cart has required only routine maintenance. It’s a best buy.”

Gene Loge, Cooperstown, N. Dak.: “My used Deere 535 baler is still in good shape. It has an automatic tie system and bale kicker, so each bale requires two motions - depressing the clutch to stop and opening the gate hydraulically, which saves wear and tear on artificial knees and arthritic hands.

“My Ritchie 300 fibreglass drinker is my worst buy. It’s rated to handle 125 beef cows. However, the drinking reservoir is so narrow that livestock have to turn their heads 90 degrees just to get at the water. Even then, their mouth doesn’t fit and they dribble and slurp so much water that during the winter an ice cone develops around the drinker. To prevent dangerous slips, I have to chip the ice away twice a week.”

Berk Palmer, Ridgeway, S.C.: Berk likes his portable Magellan 3100 GPS auto navigation system. I purchased it for a business-pleasure trip to Florida. It doesn’t show photos or play music like some of the other units on the market. However, it will take you to an address and bring you home with ease. And, because it’s portable, I can use it in any vehicle. It’s pre-loaded with newer, updated maps of all 48 lower states.”