

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

4-WD vehicle equipped with a 4-196 engine and built-in Warn 6,000-lb. capacity electric winch. I use it as a grader/bull dozer. The winch raises the blade, and gravity lowers it whenever you disengage a toggle switch."

J. Stadtmueller, Monticello, Iowa: "We're well pleased with our two **Case IH 5250** mechanical front wheel assist tractors. One of the tractors has a 3-pt. mounted sprayer on front that's able to get into tight corners. These tractors have about 114 hp, yet they're fuel efficient using slightly more than 2 gal. of fuel per hour, and even less on some jobs. I can't say enough good things about these tractors."

Lloyd Wise, Stephensport, Ky.: "Several months ago I bought a vehicle lift from **Complete Hydraulics** and it's my best buy (ph 888 736-5094). The lift was simple to install and works smooth. It makes it easy to do 'bottom of engine work' and side body work as well as work on the wheels, brakes, and axles without the hassle of jacking and jack stands. It's priced lower than anything else I could find."

He isn't happy with the high volume oil transfer pump he bought from **Harbor Freight**. "The first time I used this pump the gears in it stripped. I replaced them at my own expense but they stripped, too. However, I've had good luck with most other products I've bought from Harbor Freight."

Cliff Danke, Gloversville, N.Y.: Cliff nominates his **Gear Wrench**® ratcheting box end combination wrench set as his "best buy". "Some of the best buys I've ever made are the small tools that make projects go so much easier. I hesitated buying this wrench set because I feared they wouldn't hold up, but after using a friend's set I found they were of exceptional quality. I've used these tools constantly, and they have saved my sanity again and again."

Arnold Hollingsworth, Strasburg, Colo.: Arnold's the satisfied owner of a **Sears Craftsman 28-in.** snowblower. "Last winter Colorado had record snowfalls. We were without adequate snow removal equipment on a country road with no help from the county, so we bought this snowblower. It worked like a champ, going right through 4 and 5-ft. high snowdrifts without plugging or faltering. I'm very happy with this machine."

Henry Messersmith, Cullman, Alabama: "I like my 2005 **Makita 18-volt** cordless hammer drill. I bought it because it was on sale at about the same price as a conventional drill. I don't use this drill every day, but it's always ready to go. I use it mostly to make holes through metal up to 3/8 inch in diameter."

Wayne Hamey, Hopwood, Penn.: "I have over three acres of grass to mow with about 70 large poplar and sycamore trees and about 30 various evergreen trees. Needless to say there are a lot of leaves and sticks to clean up. The leaves are handled by my riding mower and my **Cyclone Rake** lawn vacuum (www.cyclonerake.com). This combination will pick up a lot of sticks, but sometimes the hose will plug up and clearing it can be a hassle."

"I decided to bring an incinerator to the sticks. I bought a 30-gal. metal trash can and mounted it on a dolly. I light a fire in the can and push it around the yard and burn sticks on-the-go. No more unloading a trailer, no more going back and forth, no more waiting for an incinerator full of soggy sticks to dry out before I can light it. My mobile burner works great."

Vernon Brown, Seagrove, N.C.: "My 2007 **Kubota L3240** tractor equipped with a model LA 514 loader has plenty of power

and works great.

"My 2003 **Troy-Bilt GTX 2654** riding mower is my worst buy. So far I've had to replace all three mower deck spindles. I've also replaced the steering gears twice, and I've never been able to steer this mower while backing up."

John V. Green, Harpers Ferry, Iowa: John's the proud owner of a **Polaris 500** ATV. "We live near a river, and every time it floods, cleanup is a hassle. This machine makes the cleanup work a breeze, even when the ATV starts to lose traction in muddy ground. I just fold down the back seat and have someone climb on with me to add weight, and I'm back in business. We really like it."

Merlin Wooley, Beaverton, Mich.: "My 2007 **Honda Accord** equipped with a 4-cyl. engine is my best buy. It's a fine medium size car that rides and handles well and is fuel efficient."

"I bought a used 1995 **Bandit** model 90 brush chipper and it's all the company said it would be (Bandit Industries, Remus, Mich.). It has 65 hp and makes getting rid of brush a fast, easy job that's almost fun. Great service and parts availability."

On the minus side, "I'm not real happy with my 2007 **Pellet Pro's** pellet-making mill. It's designed to let you make your own pellet stove fuel from inexpensive materials, such as corn stalks, corn cobs, switch grass, straw, seed hulls, etc. When I went to use it, most of the oil was on the floor. I put oil in the machine and plugged it in, but it vibrated so bad that I had to shut it off. The input shaft was 1/16 in. out on vertical and the same on horizontal. Another problem is that the welds on the frame (which is built too light) weren't ground down."

"I called the company about getting an oil seal and a parts list, but they told me they don't have a seal. So I'll do what I can to control the oil leak. In my opinion, the design and craftsmanship of this mill needs improvement. I'm using wood materials and haven't been able to make many good batches. I believe it'll take time and experience to learn pellet making. I'd like to hear from anyone who can help me."

Roger Kahler, Dunnell, Minn.: "**Vise Grip** brand tools and clamps are my best buy. There are a lot of copy cat locking pliers and clamps on the market, but none as good as these."

Clifton E. Rogers, Kirksville, Mo.: A 1997 **Dodge Ram 1500** pickup equipped with a 318 cu. in. gas engine and automatic transmission rates as Clifton's "best buy". "It's a great vehicle although it's underpowered a little when hauling a load. It had about 120,000 miles on it when I traded it in for a 2000 Dodge Ram 1500 equipped with a 360 cu. in. gas engine and automatic transmission. On that model the transmission never worked correctly, and the dealers who worked on it only made it worse. Finally I traded it in for a 2006 **GM 3/4-ton** pickup equipped with a diesel Duramax engine and automatic transmission. It's an excellent pickup. On a recent 400-mile trip it used only 17 gallons of fuel (23 1/2 mpg). I'm well satisfied with it."

Richard A. Rice, Waverly, Tenn.: "My **Polaris Ranger 6-wheeler** utility vehicle runs good and will go almost anywhere. It can seat three people, which is an advantage over similar vehicles of other brands. On the downside, a 'park' position would alleviate the need for setting the parking brake on grades. Also, the steering is hard and prone to transmit unwanted torque to the driver on rough terrain."

Billy Kind, Chapman, Kansas: "My 2002 **Chevrolet Silverado 1500** extended cab 4-

"Best Buy" Chainsaw Sawmill

"I'm very pleased with my Alaskan Sawmill," says a reader named Harry of Altoona, Pennsylvania, who didn't want his last name used. "It's one of the few products I've bought that lives up to what the company said it would do." He built a hunting cabin using lumber he sawed himself.

Harry learned about the Alaskan Sawmill after his neighbor cut down five large pine trees and planned to let them go to waste. The neighbor agreed to let Harry have them, so he pulled 32 10-ft. logs home. Some of the logs were 20 in. in diameter. Harry didn't quite know exactly what to do with them until he saw the Alaskan Mark III Portable Lumber Mill in a Northern Tool catalog for \$140 plus shipping (www.northerntool.com). He bought the sawmill in April 2007.

"I cut 2,500 ft. of lumber with it. I cut most of it in 1 and 1 1/4-in. boards and 2 by 4's," Harry says. "I used a Stihl MS290, which is not as big a saw as they recommended for it, but it worked fine. I liked the ease of operation. It was pure simple."

The sawmill bolts onto the chainsaw with two bolts. After laying a couple of boards on the log to make the first cut to get a flat surface, nuts on the back of the sawmill are used



Alaskan Mark III Portable Lumber Mill uses a chainsaw to do the cutting.

to set the width of lumber.

"It was very accurate," Harry says. "It's not a super fast process, but you just let the saw do the work."

He adds that he purchased recommended ripping chains and had three of them sharpened a dozen times each. He also cleaned the saw and filters regularly.

Harry says he will use the Alaskan Sawmill again when he has another opportunity to saw lumber.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Alaskan Sawmill (ph 866 233-6499; www.granberg.com).

WD pickup is my best buy. It has had work done to the rear shocks and brake pads and also the heater motor. However, it doesn't use any oil. It's a good pickup."

Patrick X. Trosk, Wasta, S. Dak.: "I like my two **International Harvester MX 120** tractors. I bought them used with about 1,000 hours on them. They're great."

"My **Bobcat T300** tracked skid steer loader is the most useful machine I've ever owned. It's completely reliable and will never lose its value."

Albert Tinnell, Shepherdsville, Ky.: Albert's pleased with his 2005 **Ford 500 Limited** all-wheel-drive 4-door sedan. "This car is roomy. My wife and I are large people but we're still comfortable in it. The all-wheel-drive adds stability when driving on wet or icy roads. No problems. It gets 22 1/2 mpg and has plenty of power. Also, it drives really nice."

On the negative side, he lists his 2004 **New Holland LS 190** skidsteer loader. "This ma-

"This machine has less than 400 hours on it, but the fuel injection pump has already been rebuilt three times."

chine has less than 400 hours on it, but already I've had the fuel-injected pump rebuilt three times. Also, two hose ends blew off the hydraulic lines with the lift arms in the raised position."

Alvin Freier, Binscarth, Manitoba: A German-built **International Harvester 624 50 hp** diesel tractor equipped with a front-end loader rates as Alvin's "best buy". "We bought it new in 1970 for \$4,500. At the time it was the only tractor I could afford to buy new. We attached a loader and have used it year around ever since then. We've overhauled it once."

"We bought a 2006 **McCulloch 1,500 psi** high pressure washer at Wal-Mart, and it's our worst buy. We were able to use it only five times before the nylon relief valve split. We called the toll-free number and left messages, but never got a reply. We also have a

McCulloch chainsaw that needs a drive sprocket, and we can't find parts for it. Now the warranty on it has expired and we're stuck with more useless junk."

Ken Iso, Tomahawk, Wis.: "My 1998 **Case 90XT** skid loader is a real workhorse and runs like a top. I plan to run it on biofuel by adding a vegetable oil tank to it with a conversion kit from www.greasecar.com. I added a similar kit to my 2000 Volkswagen Beetle diesel car and have had excellent results over the last three years. I love passing up those expensive gas stations."

Grace Grover, Elizabeth, Colo.: Grace likes her electric **Easy-Go** golf cart. "I had knobby tires installed on the rear, and now I can go anywhere on my hilly 36 acres. I use it to get horses in, to check and repair fences, and to go back and forth from house to barn. It never runs out of gas and is always ready to go when I need it."

H.G. Duncan, Aurora, Oregon: "My **Stihl** gas-powered string trimmer has never let me down. It always starts after a couple of pulls, even when I forget to drain gas from the carburetor over the winter. It cuts great with either string line or blades."

"My **Sears Craftsman** rechargeable drill is my worst buy. The problem is the batteries won't hold a charge. I've always liked Craftsman non-powered tools such as wrenches, sockets, and ratchets, etc. But every time I buy a powered item I seem to have problems. I've finally learned my lesson with this drill set-up - no more electric or gas-powered products with the Craftsman name on them."

Willard Jungbluth, Dodgeville, Wis.: "My 2007 **Simplicity Broadmoor 1600** riding mower is my best buy. I bought it to replace a **Simplicity Broadmoor 12 1/2 hp** model, which was purchased in 1992 and used exclusively to mow two large lawns. My only cost on that machine was for regular maintenance and new blades. It still had the original belts on it when I traded for the new model. I love the way the new one handles. It does a neat job of mowing and is easy for me to operate at my 86 years of age. If this model lasts as long as its predecessor, as I'm sure it will, it'll be a real best buy."

Roger Rasmussen, Polson, Montana: "It has about 310,000 miles on it with very few repairs," says Roger about his 1991 **Dodge** (Continued on next page)