

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,
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the survey form on our website at
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Eldon Kerns, Goldendale, Wash.: “Last January I bought a new **Chevrolet** 1500 1/2-ton pickup equipped with a 5.3-liter gas engine. I planned to convert it to run on liquid propane. However, after I bought it I learned that it has a new DI (Direct Injection) fuel system that can’t be converted the way the SEFI (Sequential Electronic Fuel Injection) models can.

“I’m a propane distributor and I drove my 2005 Chevrolet 3/4-ton pickup on propane until I traded it for this 2014 model. As a matter of fact, I’ve used propane in all my vehicles, including riding mowers and 4-wheelers, for 25 to 30 yrs.

“I didn’t bother to ask if the 2014 model could be converted to propane because I had never heard otherwise. I had already purchased a propane conversion kit from a company in New York for \$4,700 before I learned that I couldn’t use it. Fortunately, I hadn’t opened the kit yet so I was able to return it and get my money back. Then I tried to get my old pickup back, but the dealer had already sold it.

“Propane burns clean and is about \$2 a gal. cheaper than gas, but I can’t take advantage of

transmission would not let go while in gear and the machine would keep moving at idle. I figured out that the magnesium belt pulley on the transmission had worn enough that when it closed it would squeeze the belt, causing the machine to keep moving. I took that pulley apart and inserted a washer in between the pulleys to solve the problem. Cost was less than \$2. The dealer had estimated \$300 to \$400 to fix it. I’ve used it for a year with no problem. It does not affect the balance of the pulleys. It should be noted that you cannot weld magnesium without causing a fire.”

C.R. Williams, Comox, Vancouver Island, B.C.: “I’ve followed with interesting stories in recent issues of FARM SHOW about high-priced parts from **Deere**. Your U.S. readers might be interested in what it’s like to own Deere equipment in Canada, especially if you’re not near the border. I had to replace a glass panel on my 5085M tractor door. List price in the U.S. is \$295. Because the part is also available in Canada, Deere won’t ship direct from the U.S. Orders have to go through a Canadian dealership, which charged me \$620. Now that’s what I call a real rip-off.”

James W. Howe, Jr., Luverne, Ala.: “Several issues ago you published a report about someone who was unhappy with his **Howse** bush hog. He said that every time he used the machine, something would break and he would have to weld it.

“As near as I can figure out, he must have bought a light duty model and tried to cut 3-in. dia. trees with it. Despite his ‘worst buy’ report, I purchased a new 6-ft. wide **Howse** 6100T mower, which I really like (ph 601 428-0841; www.howseimplement.com). It does an excellent job and is built tough.

“Also on the positive side, I’ve had good luck buying from the **Surplus Center** (ph 800 488-3407; www.surpluscenter.com). They offer ‘take-offs’, which means they sell brand new equipment that has been taken off a machine and is sold as parts. They sell engines, hydraulic hoses, pumps and motors, air hydraulics, tires, belts, gearboxes, wheels, and much more.

“I was able to buy some hydraulic hoses from them for only half as much as I’d have paid locally. I also replaced all the connections on my 1960 Case 310B backhoe with 3/4-in. quick disconnect couplers. I paid \$22.95 for a complete set of male and female couplers. Locally, the same couplers would have cost more than twice that much.

“More recently, I purchased a 17 1/2 hp **Briggs and Stratton** vertical engine for my Murray lawn tractor for \$439.95 plus \$36 shipping UPS. I bought it on a Tuesday and it was delivered on Friday. Now, that’s service.”

Carl E. Fletcher, Altoona, Ala.: “Carl’s happy with his 1942 **Ford** 9N tractor, and a home-built tractor he calls his Baby N. “I painted it the same color as the 1950 8N that I grew up driving as a kid. I prefer the 8N color.

“To build the Baby N I bought an **Awesome Henry** V-8 Ford conversion kit and installed it on a Kubota tractor’s frame (ph 937 497-9447; www.awesomehenry.com). My Baby N has the 8N’s dash, running boards, and a flip-up seat. Last winter I added a 3-pt. hitch that’s operated by an electric linear actuator. I also built a bush hog, turning plow, and light disk cultivator for the Baby N.

“I also own a 1945 **Ford** 2N, 1954 **Ford** Jubilee, 1955 **Ford** 600 and 800, and 1975 **Ford** 2000.”

Terry Heckman, South Bend, Ind.: “I like my 2013 **Kubota** L4600 HST 4-WD tractor equipped with an LA764 front-end loader. I use it to pull a haybine, baler, 2-bottom plow, and bush hog. I also use it to power a post hole digger, 3-pt. mounted spreader, hay rake and rear blade. It has power to spare for any job. Last winter it started right up at

that price difference any more. If I had bought a model with the 6.0-liter SEFI engine I could have converted it. The fine for tampering with the engine’s fuel injection system is \$5,000 a day. Only someone who is EPA certified can make changes to the engine with certified equipment.”

Eldon has been working with **Wolff Specialties** in Vancouver, Wash., which is an EPA conversion center (ph 360-601-8080; www.wolffspecialties.com). Owner Dan Wolff says, “We felt extremely bad for Eldon when we found that his new 5.3-liter Chevrolet has a DI engine. This new engine type has extremely complex electronic controls, but it allows more efficient use of fuel and lowers the emission output.

“With the technology on all the new pickup models these days it’s hard to keep up, but we’ve acquired all the EPA certifications in the propane conversion systems that can be distributed in the U.S. So we’ll have a solution for Eldon in the near future. Currently his particular pickup make and model is going through the EPA certification process. Our supplier, ICOM, which is out of Michigan, says they should have that certification later this year. Once that goes through, we’ll be able to address the conversion for Eldon.”

Roger Gutschmidt, Gackle, N. Dak.: “I use a lot of **Rustoleum** fast dry spray paint. The company sells exact match colors for Deere green and yellow. I’ve bought them at Fastenal for \$10 per can and in my opinion, the colors match perfectly, as good as the paint you can buy at Deere stores for \$15 per can. The Rustoleum cans are bigger and I like the fast dry part, which makes for a good finish with no runs.”

Vernon Knack, Correctionville, Iowa: “I have a 2005 **Polaris** ATV with an automatic transmission. At about 2,600 miles, the