

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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lem corrected. I've broken several blades already."

Dennis Gustafson, Kiron, Iowa: "I frequently drive my 1989 **Plymouth** Grand Voyager LE van across the U.S. It now has more than 490,000 miles on it and still runs like a top. The engine, transmission, muffler, and tailpipe are all original. Last summer Chrysler put a photo of my van, along with a letter that I wrote to them, in the company's Hall of Fame. It has lived a rough



life as we have no garage. It sits outside every night in temperatures as low as 25 degrees below zero. And it has never had an engine heater."

Donald Zook, Burr Oak, Mich.: "My 1991 **GM** 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in., V-8 engine is my best buy. It runs great and I haven't had any problems with it. It has plenty of power to haul my livestock trailer.

"My 1987 **Chevrolet** S-10 pickup runs great and is also a best buy."

Max R. Fitzpatrick, Whiteland, Ind.: "I like my 2000 **Dodge** 1500 extended cab pickup equipped with a gas engine. It's an excellent pickup and gets more than 15 mpg, which I think is pretty good. It's safe to drive and has a comfortable ride. It also looks attractive and gets a lot of compliments. It pulls my 18-ft. trailer with ease.

"My **Sears** 220 air compressor is my worst buy. The compressor clicks and clangs. It has been replaced twice."

Gene Coots, Winnebago, Ill.: "My **Ford** F-150 pickup, equipped with a 351 cu. in. engine, is a great road vehicle. I often drive it to visit my daughters in Texas. It holds the road well, has super comfortable seats, and has a cab that offers good visibility. It's so comfortable that I hardly ever get tired on a trip. No problems after 88,000 miles."

Ken Turbett, Winnipeg, Manitoba: "We bought our 1990 **Deere** 9501 pull-type combine used in the fall of 1997, and it's our best buy. It has handled three harvests on our farm and done an excellent job. Grain threshing samples are quite clean with very few 'beat up' kernels per dump."

Jon Goembel, Fairbury, Ill.: "I'm well satisfied with my **Lincoln** 255 MIG welder. It's great for those occasional field breakdowns but we try to shop carefully so we don't end up buying junk products."

Ken Holyoak, Alapahaa, Ga.: "I don't recommend buying **Freightliner** trucks because there are no parts available for this truck in the U.S. All parts for it have to be ordered from Canada. Our truck was down for three weeks during our busy season because of bad brake shoes. It took two weeks to get a speedometer cable and two weeks to get a spring that goes under the gas pedal. We've had problems getting all the parts that we've ever needed for this truck.

"Our **Dosmatic** chemical injector is the worst chemical injector on the market. We paid between nearly \$500 for it and kept it for only two years. During that time it worked for a maximum of only two weeks at a time

before we would have to send it back to the factory for repairs. This happened several times. We ordered another brand for \$200 and it has worked like a dream."

Stanley Overmyer, Park Rapids, Minn.: Stanley nominates his 1999 **Honda** 300 Four-Trax ATV as his "best buy". "It's a very dependable machine that rides easy and can go anywhere on our farm. I use it almost every day to do farm chores. I mounted homemade metal baskets on both the front and rear racks to make it easier to haul tools.

"I'm well pleased with my **Deere** 4010 tractor. It's a dependable machine."

Eugene G. Johnson, Rapid River, Mich.: "Several years ago I bought a **Makita** router and it's my best buy. I've put in hundreds of hours of use with it - all trouble-free. It's light and easy to handle, and the bits for it are easy to change."

John Laager, Thorp, Wis.: "My 1978 **Wheelhorse** 16 hp garden tractor is my best buy. I use it all year long to plow snow during the winter and to mow grass during the summer. I've put it through a lot of hard use around our place. It's equipped with a 16 hp single cylinder engine which has a surprising amount of power. It also doesn't burn any oil and is easy on fuel. I recently replaced the fuel pump for the first time. When this tractor finally wears out I'll buy another one without hesitating."

Bob B. Wagner, Kensington, Kansas: "Our best buy ever was our 1976 **Versatile** 976 4-WD tractor. We bought it for \$75,000 and sold it 11 years later in 1987 for \$60,000. It was a great workhorse with unmatched low-end power. The only repair it ever required involved a compressor on the air conditioner. It went through only one set of batteries and the engine required only regular maintenance. This tractor was super easy to work on and the components were easy to access or to remove for repairs.

"We replaced the Versatile tractor with a **Deere** 9300 that had the same 360 hp rating. It doesn't have as much low-end torque as the Versatile's Cummins engine, but it's a little easier on fuel and has much better hydraulics at low rpm's. Also, it rides smoother than the Versatile model because it's equipped with fat 700-710-R38 radial tires which run at low air pressure and flex a lot to make for a smoother ride. The Deere doesn't turn nearly as short as the Versatile did. I found myself having to fold up implements several times in order to save a fence while pulling anhydrous tanks, because I couldn't back up."

"Our 1987 **International** 1680 combine has 3,000 hours on it and still performs as good as it did new. It has needed very few

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repairs and none of them have been expensive. It's a good machine. I hope the New Holland merger with Case-IH doesn't mess up a good thing.

"We've had all brands of pickups and trucks over the years including Ford, Dodge, and Chevy. They've all been okay, with the best still being a 3/4-ton **Chevrolet** 4-WD model which we bought new in 1980. It's still a darn good pickup."

"Our best recent new purchase is a 9,000-lb. capacity car hoist that we installed in our farm shop. I had no idea we would use it so much. It makes oil changes, exhaust work, brakes and shocks, transmissions, and rear-end work much easier to do. It works perfect every time and makes it very safe to work under a vehicle."

Roy Jamieson, Delburne, Alberta: "My worst buy was a **Juel** tire bead breaker. It doesn't even make a good boat anchor."

George Mills, Port Byron, N.Y.: George likes his **Knight** 8014 slinger manure spreader. "It does a great job of spreading manure no matter what the rate - heavy, light, or anywhere in-between - and can transport it on the road without leaking."

Robert Ruston, Kelvington, Sask.: Robert's the satisfied owner of several **Allis-Chalmers** tractors including a 1949 B and a 1955 WD45 equipped with a front-end loader, and a D17 equipped with a diesel engine. "The tractors have required very few repairs. All of them are still working good. I had an Allis-Chalmers 7010 tractor that developed a hole in one of the cylinder walls because we used the wrong anti-freeze. I haven't had any other problems with it.

"I've used two **Allis-Chalmers** round balers since 1959. On one of them the twine eyelet in the hood wore down about 1/8 in. It takes a lot of twine to do that."

"My 1983 **Deutz** DX120 tractor still runs great.

"Over the years I've had 14 different **Chevrolet** and **GM** pickups. The last one I bought was a 1995 4-WD 1/2-ton model equipped with a 4.3-liter, V-6 engine. It has about 35,000 miles on it and has been trouble-free."

Ronald Swank, Shelby, Ohio: "I bought a 1998 **Jeep** Cherokee equipped with a 4.0-liter engine for my wife, and it's my best buy. It was my first experience with Chrysler and it turned out to be a really good one. The engine isn't big, but it has more power than I had hoped for. This car handles and runs so well that my wife won't drive another one."

Curt Wylie, Mount Vernon, Wash.: Curt bought his 1997 **GM** Sierra extended cab pickup used. He says he likes it but has nevertheless had some problems with it. "I love the pickup itself. It drives great, has a quiet and comfortable cab, and gets a respectable 15 to 18 mpg. But it has had a lot of mechanical problems. It has about 40,000 miles on it now and is in the shop for a coolant leak. At about 30,000 miles, one of the rear wheel seals got ruined. The front end went badly out of alignment. Both the license plate light and the under-hood light had poor connections and quit working. At only about 40,000 miles the transmission went bad, but the company said they wouldn't help because the pickup was out of warranty. After we expressed dissatisfaction the dealer gave us a slight discount on the repair cost. Even so, my total repair bill after only about 15 months of ownership has already been \$3,500."

Bill Moore, Forgan, Okla.: "We've had trouble with our **Rodex** 4000 rodent torch for killing prairie dogs underground in their dens. We've tried everything to make it work but with no luck. The unit itself works fine but it won't kill the dogs. The company sent out three people to show us how to use it but they couldn't kill them either. I think it might work fine in other parts of the country but here the prairie dogs dig very deep tunnels because our water table is quite low."

"I asked for my money back and the company said they would issue a refund if I would ship the unit back to them."

Roman Schroeder, Washington, Mo.: Roman's the satisfied owner of a 1999 **Suzuki** King Quad 300 ATV. "It has a good selection of gears to fit whatever job I'm doing, and it rides good. The only time it needs more power is when I'm going up a long hill in high gear. It sometimes shifts hard in the lower gear ranges so I made a heel shifter for it. It's easier on my foot to shift with my heel than with my toes."

Tom Lochbrunner, Winnsboro, La.: "My best buys through the years have been my **Chevrolet** pickups. I've been buying used Chevy pickups since 1974, usually with 40,000 to 70,000 miles on them. I had to replace the automatic transmission on one model that had been used to pull a large cattle trailer. Otherwise it's had no major problems.

"My worst buy was my 1969 **Ford** F-250 pickup. At 12,400 miles the rod bearing started knocking. In 1973 I bought another new **Ford** F-250, and on that model at 41,000 miles the rod broke and punched holes in the block and oil pan. Needless to say, I haven't bought any more Fords since then."

"We called the company and they were helpful, but even after the bits are sharpened they just won't cut."

Dan Farrand, Long Valley, N.J.: "Our **Deere** 7800 MFWD is almost a perfect tractor. It's easy to handle, rides well, and has power. The cab is roomy and comfortable.

"Our **Gleaner** R-42 combine is a pleasure to operate. It's equipped with a Cummins engine that has been trouble-free except for an oil leak that was hard to find but easy to fix. The engine does like to use fuel, though.

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Drill Doctor** which is designed to sharpen drill bits. "It doesn't work for us. We called the company and they were helpful, but even after the bits are sharpened they just won't cut."

Robert W. Schoenbeck, Red Bud, Ill.: "Our **Toreq** 12-yard push-off scraper is our best buy (Toreq Inc., 803 S. Barzen, Thief River Falls, Minn. 56701 ph 218 964-5272). It's one of the only pieces of equipment I've ever bought that I've been able to hook onto and use without making any adjustments. It works beautifully. I couldn't be happier with it.

"Another great product is **Briggs & Stratton** small engine gas treatment. It helps keep gas tanks and carburetors clean and even helps engines start easier."

Sam Scarlett, New Market, Tenn.: Sam likes his **Deere** 925 MoCo disc mower-conditioner. "We bought it used two years ago and haven't had any major problems with it. It's one of the best disc mower-conditioners that we've ever used. It works much better than the older mower we had been using.

"My **DR** push mower is my worst buy. It hasn't worked as good as the company's advertisements say it will. It cuts good in short grass, but in tall grass it wraps up and isn't as easy to use. It works better than hand-carried weed eaters, but not a lot better."