

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

complaint is that it has a lot of electronics and if something goes wrong with that, I can't fix it at all. I have to call for a service mechanic to trace down the problem and repair it. My father and I have run Deere equipment for over 40 years and really feel that 'Nothing Runs Like A Deere'.

"My 1993 **Ford F-150 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 302 cu. in. engine and 4-speed transmission is my worst buy. This pickup has really soured me on Fords. It's underpowered and gets a horrible 10 mpg without pulling a load. I can't start out in second gear without having to rev the engine to at least 1,100 rpm's. Otherwise the engine will kill. I won't buy another Ford again."

Dustin Pentz, Coalville, Utah: Dustin likes his 2000 **Honda Rancher ES** ATV, as well as his father's two **Honda 300 Fourtrax** ATVs, one a 1995 model and the other a 1997 model. "A few years ago during hunting season, the 1995 model rolled end over end several hundred feet down a steep, brushy mountain, landing upside down. Fortunately no one was in or around it. The massive crash blew out three of the tires, ruining one wheel rim, and bent the axle and mangled both racks. However, there was no damage to the body. We fixed the tires where it lay and then drove it right out of the steep draw that it had landed in. We replaced the axle, racks, and one rim. I don't know of any other vehicle that could have taken this kind of abuse and still run strong."

W. LeClair, Frankestown, N.H.: A 1997 **Dodge 2500** pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel pickup rates as his "best buy". "It's built rugged and has a lot of power and a comfortable cab. It gets about 20 mpg. It's somewhat difficult to start in the winter unless I use a block heater."

On the negative side, he lists his **Massey-Ferguson 4255** tractor which he bought new last March. "It has many deficiencies including poor brakes, pulsating hydraulics, and a leaking rear axle seal. The engine has worked good so far. This tractor must have been made on a Monday. The dealer has been responsive, but my confidence in Massey Ferguson is low."

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Neil Kramme, Owensville, Mo.: Neil's satisfied with his 1997 2-WD **Kawasaki Mule 2500** ATV. "It has room for three passengers, high torque, an air cleaner intake at the top of the rollbar, and is shaft driven. It has a top speed of about 30 mph. There's a lot of standard equipment including the roll cage, a wire screen between the seat and cargo, brake and tail lights, bumper and hitch. All these features are a plus compared to a comparable size Deere Gator. But the biggest difference between the two machines is that this one has a much better ride."

Jerry Gesch, Willmar, Minn.: Jerry's "best buy" is his **Rubber Maid 300-gal.** stock tank. "When our kids were small they went through a \$25 plastic pool almost every year. Ten years ago I bought the 300-gal. Rubbermaid tank for them to use, and use it they have. The drain on the pool makes it easy to empty. During the winter I store my water hoses under it. It cost about \$180, which is well worth it considering all the fun

my kids and wife have had with it."

Wayne R. Cowan, Oxford, Neb.: "It's reliable and has been trouble-free. We use it to check on center pivot irrigation systems and to spray weeds, etc.," says Wayne about his 1992 **Honda Fourtrax** ATV equipped with a 300 cc engine.

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his **Kongskilde** grain vacuum. "The problem is that the hose plugs up if it gets inserted into the grain too far. Also, it works really slow. Our 6-in. grain auger has much more capacity. We only used the vacuum once or twice because it was quicker and easier to scoop grain into the auger."

Gerald and Ron Schneider, Troy, Kan.: "Our 2000 **Caterpillar Challenger 35** Wide Tractor is our best buy. We installed two **Agri-Products** poly saddle tanks inside the tracks with a total capacity of 520 gallons. The tanks are another best buy (Agri-Products, Inc., 1903 Division Ave., York, Neb. 68467 ph 800 288-1117). When we plant corn with the Challenger and our 12-row **White 5100** planter, we put grass herbicides in the tanks and 10-34-0 fertilizer in a 400-gal., 3-pt. mounted tank. With this system we had a lot less compaction than when we used a front wheel assist tractor equipped with dual wheels and a 400-gal. tank. The compaction caused by the tracks goes straight down whereas the duals pack down and also out toward the rows.

"We had a 60-ft. Kuger spray boom on a 1,000-gal. trailer. We took the boom off and made a 3-pt. hitch for it that matches the quick hitch on the Challenger. In minutes we can have the spray boom hooked up and be ready to spray. We spray postemergence broadleaf weeds on the corn and Roundup on our drilled beans.

"We use the Challenger to cultivate and sidedress anhydrous ammonia on our corn. We use a 2000 **Landoll 12-row** cultivator equipped with a **Navigator** guidance hitch and a **Micro-Trac** anhydrous controller. They're all best buys.

"We ordered the Challenger tracks with special application belts as we also use it to chop our alfalfa haylage and corn silage. These belts don't tear up the ground whenever we turn at the end of the field. We also own a 1990 **Cat Challenger 65**. Tracks are the only way to go on our Missouri River bottomland.

"Another best buy are the **B-33 Mole** anhydrous ammonia knives we use on the cultivator (Hi-Pro Mfg., Box F, Rt. 24 West, Waseka, Ill. 60970 ph 815 432-5271). They look like they would pull hard. However, they pull easy. They seal by closing from the bottom up and are long wearing. It's the best sealing knife I've ever used."

On the "worst buy" side, "A couple of years ago we bought a 3-tool set of **Texas Strippers** wire strippers at a farm show. Two of them broke the first time we used them. They're made in China."

Keith Ross, Tulsa, Okla.: "I'm well satisfied with my 1999 **Ford Super Duty F-250 4-WD** pickup equipped with a **Power Stroke** diesel engine and 6-speed transmission. It rides a little rough but of course it is a truck. The best mileage it gets is 15 mpg. I think Ford has the best looking pickup on the market. The diesel engine runs quiet and has a lot of power."

Danny Hawkins, Molina, Colo.: Danny likes his 1970 **Case 870** tractor equipped with a cab and 12-speed powershift transmission.

"I bought this 75 hp tractor at an auction for \$5,000. It had been used very little. Apparently it had been kept in a shed for 30 years as it still had the original tires and paint. After about 500 hours of hard plowing, disking, cutting corn silage, working with a hydraulic blade, and pulling planters and haying machinery I can definitely say it's my best buy."

Vernon K. Thomas, Callahan, Fla.: "I purchased a 1995 **Case 580 Super L** backhoe with an extend-a-hoe. It has a 30-gal. tank which barely keeps me going for eight hours. My trade-in was a 580 **K Case** with only an 18-gal. tank, and I could run it hard for more than 10 hours. They told me the poor fuel efficiency was just the nature of the beast because the engine has a turbocharger and 15 more horsepower than the 580 **K** model.

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A **Case** engine is good for only about 3,500 hours, if you can even get that many hours on it. The booms are made out of ductal steel which isn't even as good as cast iron. I've worn out the engines in both machines. I also broke the boom on both of them.

"I have a 1993 **Chevrolet 2500** with windshield wiper problems. My son has a

1994 1500 model which was had a factory recall. However, mine wasn't recalled apparently because there weren't enough complaints. I was told that I'd have to pay to fix the wiper problems. I'd like to know if I'm the only one with this problem.

"I've tried to wear out my **Deutz 6250 50** hp tractor but I don't think I can. It's my best buy. It doesn't use a lot of fuel. It keeps on going and going, just like the Energizer bunny. The problem is that they quit selling this tractor in the U.S. Parts are still available, but not the tractors."

Mark Kramer, Harrington, Wash.: A 1998 **Dodge 2500** Quad Cab pickup equipped with a diesel engine and 5-speed manual transmission pickup rates as Mark's "best buy". "I'm well satisfied with it. It has 83,000 miles on it and is still going strong. It could be more fuel efficient. It gets only 15 mpg but I do have a lead foot. The front rotors have had to be replaced already even though they've never been turned. The problem is the rotors aren't thick enough. Also, the wheel bearing on the left front wheel exploded, causing a lot of damage."

Gerald Demers, Dresden, Ontario: Gerald is generally satisfied with his new **White 6808** central fill planter equipped with a 16-row splitter. "We use it to plant our corn, soybeans and wheat. The front bar is set for 8 by 30-in. rows, and we can use the 16-row units on back to plant 24 10-in. rows of beans or wheat. We ordered the planter with heavy downpressure springs for no-till and a

(Continued on next page)

Reader Gives JCB Tractor "Thumbs Up"

John Parker of McCutchenville, Ohio, tells FARM SHOW he was impressed with the **JCB Fastrac** tractor he field tested last spring—a 3185 4-WD model equipped with a 6-cyl. Cummins diesel engine.

"This is a great tractor that represents a whole new concept in farm power. It's by far the best tractor I've used in my 20 years of farming," says Parker. "The JCB dealer was willing to bring it out to my farm even though he's 135 miles away (Ted Mallard, American Equipment Service, Wilmington, Ohio ph 937 486-3101). I tested it for about 10 hours and used it to pull a 21-ft. field cultivator with a rolling field finisher behind it, as well as a 21-ft. Krause disk, on fall chisel plowed ground. The 185 hp engine had plenty of power.

"The tractor is equipped with four equal size wheels and a frame-mounted air suspension system with four huge coil springs, one for each wheel. This full suspension system is definitely superior to anything else offered in North America. It makes the tractor ride unbelievably smooth in the field—better than most pickups. It also always keeps the tractor level when pulling an implement. If the implement starts pulling the back end of the tractor down, the air shocks on the back end pump up and transfer weight to the front of the tractor to keep it level. There's a lifetime warranty on the suspension system.

"The tractor has a top road speed of 45 mph which greatly reduces time spent traveling between farms. It has an Eaton 6-speed transmission with a JCB automatic shift, push button-operated transmission connected to it for a total of 54 speeds. It shifts like a semi truck and has air brakes



like one, too. I think it would work great using a dolly to haul a big grain trailer equipped with air brakes. A platform behind the cab can be used to carry a 500-gal. spray tank and a boom up to 120 ft. wide. A 300-gal. tank could be mounted on front for a total capacity of 800 gallons. The front 3-pt. and pto would also work great for operating a snow plow or blower.

"The full width cab has great visibility and makes the operator feel like he's inside a truck cab. The cab has two seats in it so another person can ride along with no problem. Our 5-year-old daughter rode along and brought her coloring book, coloring pictures while the tractor was in the field.

"The tractor is built in England but there's a good supply of parts in the U.S. U.S. tractor makers must be impressed, because I've heard Deere is trying to design its own full suspension tractor.

"The company offers four models from 115 to 185 hp. The three smallest models are equipped with Perkins diesel engines. The tractors are equipped with a front and rear 3-pt. hitch and pto. A 4-wheel steer version is also available for getting around tight corners in barns."