

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

ter stating that the company would do everything in their power to make the repairs. However, they never did. I called an attorney who said that, because it's an out-of-state company, the best I could do would be to go to small claims court but that means a limit of \$1,500 in compensation. So I'm stuck with a barn that leaks."

Dale Brandt, Freeburg, Ill.: "I traded my Deere 7000 6-row planter and Deere 15-ft. no-till drill for a used 8-row **Kinze** planter equipped with splitter row units. It's my best buy because I can use the same planter for both corn and beans. The planter is three years old but had been used to plant only about 150 acres a year so it was still in great shape. I paid \$25,000 for it whereas a new one of the same size would cost at least \$32,000. I'm using it this spring to plant 800 acres of Roundup Ready soybeans and figure that I'll save \$4,000 to \$5,000 in seed thanks to the increased accuracy. In my opinion, the value of no-till drills will drop way off this year because the low wheat prices mean a lot of farmers will plant beans instead of wheat. Another reason for this trend is that Roundup Ready soybeans can be grown cheap.

"I gain width by switching to an 8-row planter instead of a 6-row. Using the same machine to plant both corn and beans isn't a disadvantage because there's only a few days a year where I need to plant both crops at the same time. If necessary I can rent another planter."

Calvin R. Wilson, Campbellsburg, Ky.: "A few years ago there was a "best buy" report in FARM SHOW on my 1975 Deutz D5206 tractor. I still own that tractor and it still runs great. I later bought a used 1975 Deutz D6806 tractor which is also a best buy. No problems at all. Deutz tractors are easy to handle, have good pto's, and are cheap to operate."

Claude Jahn, Cambridge, Wis.: Claude says his 1987 Honda rototiller is his "best buy". "It's equipped with a 3 1/2 hp, 4-stroke OHV engine and 24-in. wide front tines and has two forward gears and one reverse. I've used it 20 to 25 hours each year and it still starts right up on the first or second pull. It's equipped with an advanced automatic decompression feature that makes the starter rope easy to pull. This rototiller can cover more than twice as much ground as other comparable size models I've used in the past, while using only about half as much fuel. It can work up any type of soil, including tough sod, with little effort required by the operator. This machine makes rototilling fun, not a chore."

Chris Runstedler, Listowel, Ontario: "We've owned about 25 different Massey Ferguson tractors over the past 35 years and all of them have been best buys. Perkins diesel engines have great lugging ability, start well in cold weather, and are easy on fuel. The transmissions have generally performed well. Best of all, Massey tractors cost 10 to 40 percent less than comparable size Deere or Case-IH models and are every bit as good or better.

"My newest model is a 6180 which is equipped with a creeper gear transmission and front 3-pt. hitch and pto. I bought it to operate my pto-driven Meri Crusher which I use to clear land and grind up tree stumps and brush. I was told that using the Meri Crusher would be a challenge for my tractor's pto driveline. Apparently a lot of tractors can't handle the Meri Crusher but after running the crusher for more than 100 hours with my

6180, I've had no problems. The tractor is a pleasure to drive and the Dynashift transmission is fantastic. Best of all, this tractor costs about \$25,000 less than a comparable Deere without the factory-mounted front 3-pt. hitch."

On the "worst buy" side, Chris lists the **Cummins** 855, 315 hp, 6-cyl. diesel engine that powers his 1989 Ford tandem axle feed truck. "At about 60,000 miles the piston head came off the number 5 cylinder and completely ruined the engine. The 3-year warranty had expired but the dealer told us that Cummins would 'treat us right'. However, the company paid for only about \$1,500 of parts and we had to pay the balance - more than \$9,000 (Canadian). Other truck fleet owners we talked to said we should complain. We finally talked to the top representative of Cummins in Canada but he didn't want to hear about it. We own 20 different diesel-powered machines and have never had an engine failure like this, but then we had never owned a Cummins diesel before either."

Neil Wehr, Sigourney, Iowa: "Last fall we bought a **Case-IH** 1466 tractor and used it to

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pull a chisel plow. It has a lot of power and performed well. The only problem was a chipped tooth on a bull and pinion gear which we promptly repaired."

Richard D. Pilgrim, Nevada, Iowa: "My 1997 Ford F-150 pickup is my best buy. It rides comfortably, shifts smooth, and at 17 to 18 mpg is fuel efficient. The 4.6-liter engine has plenty of power to pull my flatbed trailer.

"My 1997 Mercury Sable car is the hardest riding car I've ever owned. I think my F-150 pickup rides better. The car also makes too much wind noise."

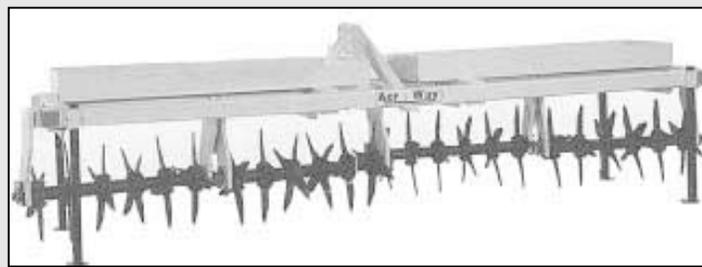
Wayne Gunderson, Vining, Minn.: "My best buy is my Milwaukee 3/8-in. electric reversible drill. I've used it for about 10 years and it has never failed. One caution - when using larger drill bits that might grab, always remember how much power this tool has because it could be twisted right out of your hands."

Roger Hubmer, Mankato, Minn.: Roger's satisfied with his Dual mini backhoe attachment designed for skidsteer loaders. "It's an affordable alternative to the higher priced backhoes on the market, selling for only about \$1,600. We use it to repair field tile, etc. It can dig a trench 5 1/2 ft. deep."

Conrad Wright, Greentown, Ind.: "My Westendorf front-end loader is well designed and built heavy. Anyone who needs a loader should price one.

"My IBM Aptiva computer is also a best buy. It comes with Lotus spread sheets. I added a Brother printer which also faxes, copies, scans, and prints.

"I like my 1998 GM Sonoma pickup but I hate the automatic lights on it. The only way to turn them off is to hit them with a hammer."



Jim Martindale of North American Agro says you can improve performance of Aerway tillage tools by changing the "twist" on the tines.

Kit Boosts Performance Of Aerway Tillage System

"If you've got an Aerway system that doesn't work as well as you'd like, there's a reason. It's not built right," says Jim Martindale, an agricultural consultant with North American Agro who has worked on Aerway "aerators" since they were first imported into North America in 1984. He recently came out with a conversion kit that he says makes them work as originally intended.

The Aerway tillage system was invented by New Zealand dairy farmer Peter Bannin as a pasture renovator. After it caught on quickly in North America, U.S. distributor Holland Hitch took out its own patents, apparently discontinuing payments to Bannin in New Zealand. According to Martindale, that's when the problems started. He says the Aerway systems built in North America since 1988 do not work like the original machine.

"The company reworked the machine so it would mix more surface residue into the ground but it required a lot more ballasting to work properly. The original machine sliced through the ground cleanly and smoothly, fracturing the soil and allowing moisture to penetrate, without mixing in residue," explains Martindale.

While consulting with Aerway owners across the U.S., Martindale discovered that the helix arrangement of the tines on the Aerway was not a mirror-image on either side of the machine. The result was that the machine would wander from side to side and it was difficult to keep the tines in the ground consistently.

After successfully reworking a few machines to reconfigure the twist of the tines, Martindale has put together a conversion kit that he says will make any existing Aerway system work like the original New Zealand machine if that's what the farmer wants. If he wants the machine to mix more surface residue in with the soil, he can simply switch the tines back but use Martindale's configuration so the machine pulls more evenly no matter which way it's set up.

The "Gen-Till" kit consists of a set of tapered shims that change the twist of the tines in relation to the axis. You can use them with existing tines or buy a complete new set of Gen-Till tines which North American Agro says it makes out of an improved material.

"Once converted, much less ballast is required and the horsepower requirement is reduced 25 to 30 percent. Tines wear



Kit consists of two shims per tine.

longer once the machine is operating properly and fewer passes are needed to finish tillage before planting," says Martindale. "Hay producers and no-tillers are especially impressed with the benefits of a modified machine. It fractures the soil and allows moisture to penetrate without mixing in residue or chemicals. Farmers say it's like having a completely different machine after we're done."

Gen-Till shims sell for \$12 per pair and you need one pair for each tine. You also need longer mounting bolts, which you can buy locally. If you still want the tines to lift the soil and mix in residue, you can simply reverse them.

A kit including both shims and Martindale's improved tines sells for \$32 to \$36 per row, depending on material used in the tines. (They're available in Rockwell C-scale 30, 40 or 50. The tines work-harden and are the same hardness throughout. Factory case-hardened tines are only C-scale 15 once the case hardening wears off, Martindale notes.)

North American Agro is also working on a new mounting system for tines which will eliminate most of the bolts required. A donut-shaped casting will clamp onto each side of the tines, providing a smooth rolling surface along the ground and making it quick and easy to change the tines as needed. "That will make it almost identical to the design of the original Aerway machine invented in New Zealand," he notes.

Do-it-yourself kits are available direct to both individuals and dealers.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Martindale, North American Agro, 8865 North C.R. 600 W., Cipio, Indiana 47273 (ph 812 392-3060 or 812 579-6711).