

Best & Worst Buys

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used so much they're wearing out.

"Here's the way it works. You measure the diameter of a newborn calf's hoof and



that is converted to a weight. The weights are printed right on the tape next to the measurements. When I first got the tapes a couple years ago, I first checked them with a regular calf scale. I was so skeptical I checked 30 to 40 weights and they were all within 4 to 5 lbs., which is good enough for me. I don't have to carry a scale with me anymore and it's a lot quicker and easier to use. I have Charolais, Angus and Herefords and it works on all of them. It sells for \$8.95 from Farm Home Offices, 1965 64th St., Garrison, Iowa 52229 ph 800-788-7218 or 612 920-0907."

Tommy Armstrong, Bloomfield, Ky.: "I'm well satisfied with my **Case-IH 5140** Maxxum tractor which replaced my Deere 4020. It has a lot of power, starts easy in the winter, and handles well.

"My **New Holland 650** round baler is my worst buy. It never worked right from day one. The hay had to be dry, the windrow just right, and the baler twine just so for it to work right. I had to have my neighbor bale half my hay just so we could get done. My old **New Holland 853** baler would run circles around this model."

Ted Sookaci, Fombell, Pa.: Ted's impressed with his 1985 **White 2-85** tractor. "It has 3,100 hours on it but still works great. My only expenses have been for filters, tires, and a radiator repair. I use it to do all the major work on my 200-acre farm.

"I use my 1976 **Gehl 95** grinder-mixer every week. Over the years I've replaced three bearings and a main belt. No other problems."

On the minus side, he lists his 1980 **White 2-70** tractor. "I bought it used with only 675 hours on it and thought that I was buying a quality product that would provide years of service. However, after two broken crankshafts, a failed water pump, and hydraulic and transmission problems, I finally gave up and sold the tractor to a dealer. It had only 1,510 hours when it left the farm.

"I own several **Oliver** tractors - an 88 diesel, 77 diesel, 880G, 550G, and 1550G, along with the **White 2-85**, and have had good luck with all of them. Some of the older models have more than 8,000 hours on them with no repairs other than engine overhauls. Some of my neighbors have 1655 models with high hours and they haven't experienced anything like the problems I've had with my 2-70. When I bought the 2-70 I thought that it was identical to the 1655. Since then I've noticed that 2-70's are the most available used **White** tractor, and now I know why."

Joseph Murnane, Jr., Girard, Kan.: "My 1997 **Century 100** wire feeder welder is an all-around good, compact machine."

Cliff Conway, Comanche, Texas: Cliff's impressed with new and reconditioned wind-

mills from **Muller Industries, Inc.**, (1102 West 21st St., Yankton, S. Dak. 57078). "This company starts with good used Aermotor windmill parts that were originally made in Chicago. They recondition some of the parts and make others on their own. I've sold many of their windmills over the past 12 years and have never had a claim against any of them. The company has a 12-year warranty against defects in materials and workmanship which is the best warranty I know of in the U.S. They produce a good product."

Eldon Harvey, Ft. Pierre, S. Dak.: "My best buy is my 1991 **Belarus 572** tractor. I have over 2,000 hours on it and use it for all my work. It'll pull a 36-ft. grain drill on the level. It does have oil leaks which is a common problem with **Belarus** tractors. I also have a **Belarus 1500** model that I bought used and like it too. Both tractors pull good. I wouldn't hesitate to buy another one."

David V. Smith, Beloit, Ohio: David owns a "best buy" 1985 **Bolens 1502** garden tractor equipped with a 3-cyl. 15 hp diesel engine. "This tractor was built by Iseki in Japan. Before I bought this tractor I used to wear out an 18 hp **Case** model every two or three years. No problems with it - just regular maintenance. It has all the features my larger tractors have including a 3-speed pto, differential lock, 3-pt., etc. I use it to mow and spray. It's also fuel efficient."

Jared Chaddock, Batavia, N.Y.: Jared likes his **Stihl** chain saws - a 1997 017, 029 **Farm Boss**, and 036 **Super**. "My brother and I use the saws only on occasion to cut firewood, and they sometimes will sit for months at a time. They always start, however, as if they had just been used the day before. All three models have great power and I can use the full length of the bar without any problems. They're all easy on fuel. At the end of the day I hardly feel like I've even been running a saw.

"My 1997 **Husqvarna 51** chain saw is my worst buy. We were able to use it only a couple of days to cut firewood before we found out that the oiler wasn't working properly, which caused the chain and sprocket to wear excessively. The problem was an improperly machined oil hole, which we fixed ourselves. However, the dealer wouldn't replace the worn parts because he said that we had 'altered' the saw. We promptly went to a different dealer and traded the saw in for the **Stihl 036** model."

Neil Carleton, Clatskanie, Ore.: Neil's impressed with his 1987 **Ford F-250 4-WD** extended cab pickup equipped with a 6.9-liter diesel turbocharged engine and 3-speed automatic transmission. "We load it up with an 11-ft. 2,500-lb. camper, hook a 18-ft. stock trailer full of horses and mules behind it, and head for the mountains. It gets decent mileage and has a lot of power on hills. It's built **Ford** tough."

F.H. Goforth, Alexander, Ark.: "My **Kawasaki Mule 500** ATV is the best thing since sliced bread. It lets me carry everything I need to repair them. I added a **Lexan** windshield and top onto the machine - plexiglass won't work. I use my Mule every day, and my 7-year-old grand daughter even uses it to run errands."

Lewis A. Durst, Aurora, W. Va.: "My 1950 **Allis-Chalmers WD** and 1960 **Allis-Chalmers D-12** tractors are both best buys.

I farmed with them until 1975 when our dealer went out of business. I still own both tractors. They've both been overhauled once.

"Since 1975 I've been using **Deere** tractors - a 2030, 2240, 1050 **MFWD**, 350 dozer, 575 skid steer loader, and 212 and 345 garden tractors. I had to replace a cracked fuel injector on the 2030 five years ago and also replaced a fuel pump on the 2240. The **Deere** tractors are all best buys, too.

"My **New Holland** haybine and manure spreader and **Fox** chopper are best buys. So is my **Deere 345** round baler."

Monty Main, Crockett, Texas: Monty nominates his **Barrett 32** by 8-ft. aluminum gooseneck trailer with dual tandem wheels as his "best buy". "This trailer is built for commercial haulers. I like the versatility it offers with the floating gate option in the front. It lets me haul commercial cattle or show cattle at the same time. The company stands behind its product and offers a 6-year warranty on the welds and other parts. We've already worn out one truck used to pull this trailer. The trailer looks as good today as the day we bought it.

"My **Makita 14-in.** chop saw is my worst buy. The first **Makita** I bought quit working after I made only six cuts through some 3/4-in. dia. pipe. I took it back to the dealer the next day and he gave me another saw to use. That one lasted only about five days before it quit, too. Both saws weren't used enough to even burn the factory blade up. I still haven't gotten the second saw fixed because of dealer problems."

Lewis Senter, Plainview, Texas: "Spraying now is extremely accurate," Lewis says, thanks to the 1997 and 1998 **Raven SCS 440**

"The first one I bought quit working after I made only six cuts through some pipe. The second one lasted only about five days."

spray monitors he uses (**Raven Industries Inc.**, P.O. Box 5107, Soux Falls, S. Dak. 57117; ph 605 336-2750). "There are no wasted chemicals. The system is extremely reliable and user-friendly. It pays for itself quickly because of exact chemical application per acre. It really gives the operator confidence the spraying job is correct."

Likewise, he says he's had good luck with his 1997 **Dodge 1500 4-WD** pickup equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine. "It handles well, has plenty of power and is easy on gas. I've had no problems in 42,000 miles."

On the negative side, the 1998 **Red Ball 10-row (30-in.)** hooded sprayer he uses leaves something to be desired. "The spray tips are hard to reach for cleaning or when changing to another size tip."

Douglas Weitz, Endicott, Wash.: Douglas's "best buy" is his 1991 **Ford F-250 XLT Lariat 3/4-ton** pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter diesel. "This pickup gets good mileage, has plenty of power and starts easy. It drives and rides like a Cadillac. I'm also pleased with the dealer service."

Donald D. Tryor, Bemidji, Minn.: One of Donald's "best buys" is a 1997 9 by 49-in. **Enco** milling machine (5000 West Bloomingdale, Chicago, Ill. 60639; ph 800 873-3626). "Everything on the mill works as advertised, especially the servo power feed and the 3-axis digital readout. I've used it to

make a new oil filter base for an **Oliver 660** tractor and to make other parts that are hard to find, such as jets and throttle shafts for carburetors."

Another "best buy" is his **Lincoln** welder. "The dealer fixed initial problems with it - it needed a new liner - and it's worked fine ever since."

Matthew R. Wilson, E. Liberty, Ohio: Matthew has only one complaint with his 1994 **Great Plains** solid stand 15-ft. grain drill. "They should spread the seed units out something similar to the **Deere 750's**."

Walter Baldner, Jr., Austin, Minn.: "Our 'best buy' is a **Deere 4230** tractor we purchased new in 1973. We overhauled the engine at 8,640 hours and it now has about 12,400 on it. We installed 50 series pistons when we overhauled the engine so it starts easily in cold weather. We use the tractor for all our spraying and snow-plowing, and the pto works well to fill our grain dryer with our 10 by 16-in. auger."

Arnold Helgeson, Southey, Sask.: "It's a great tractor for our farm," says Arnold about the 1998 **Case-IH Steiger 9350 4-WD** tractor he and his sons bought. "The 310 hp **Cummins M11** engine and 12-speed transmission have plenty of power. It never slows down, even pulling our 40-ft. tow-between air drill. The hydraulics are fast and the cab is comfortable with its air swivel seat."

Ronald J. Fitzgerald, Seeley's Bay, Ont.: "It makes more even heat and heats the water heater better with no more wood than other wood furnaces with box stoves I've used," says Ronald, pleased with his **Cozyburn** outdoor wood furnace (**Cozyburn Manufacturing Inc.**, Box 888, Arborg, Manitoba, Canada R0C 0A0; ph 204 364-2318).

On the negative side, he's unhappy with his **Makita 5-in.** angle grinder. "The brushes burned out after one year. I replaced them and then the armature failed. This grinder cost \$300 and had only a one-year warranty. So I bought a **Craftsman** for \$100 that has a two-year warranty. It works better."

J.G. Chrisman, Pittsboro, Ind.: He's had a lot of problems with the 1995 **Ford F-150** pickup, equipped with 6-cyl. engine and standard transmission, which he bought used last June. "The clutch went out in July and again in November. This time, there was extensive damage to the transmission which required a lot of repairs and downtime. About three weeks later the transmission and clutch went bad again. All this with normal driving, not pulling a trailer or any extra weight."

Sheila Hoffman, Ruther Glen, Va.: "We wanted a pole-type building about 30 by 40-ft. so we could put a shed off the roof on each side. We'd tentatively settled on a **Steelman** building and even put a deposit on one last fall when we began to suspect it just wasn't going to meet our needs. We tried to get our deposit back but were told we were allowed only three days to change our minds. Finally, we decided we'd go with what we could get for our deposit - a 10 by 10-ft. shed. Needless to say, we're not very happy with the sales people, customer service people or the way **Steelman** runs their business."

Thomas Spurliw, Ft. Lypton, Colo.: Thomas is unhappy with his new **Coleman 10 hp 5,000-watt** generator. "The output voltage is determined by the engine rpm's. The owner's manual, which was missing, stated the voltage was factory-set. And it was. After I purchased a volt meter, I discovered the voltage was set at 135. I'd think **Coleman** could at least include a volt meter with the generator for little or no extra cost."