

Best & Worst Buys

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Robert Ridenour, College Corner, Ohio: "My best buy is my 1997 **Ford F-150** pickup equipped with a fuel injected 6-cyl. engine. It can pull a 5-ton fertilizer spreader with no problems.

"I also like my **New Holland 325** skid steer loader which I bought used. I replaced the original 2-cyl. Kohler engine with a more powerful Wisconsin 4-cyl. engine. Now the machine can do a lot of jobs that it wasn't designed to do."

Mark Malsam, Hugo, Minn.: Mark's impressed with his 1995 **Ford F-350** pickup equipped with a power stroke diesel engine. "It runs well, gets 17 to 20 mpg, and has enough power to pull my trailers. I've put more than 40,000 miles on it with no problems. It sits outside sometimes in the winter but always starts.

"My worst buy is my 1993 **Polaris 350** ATV. The engine backfires and blows the muffler off whenever I let up on the throttle. It's also hard on fuel. I had to bore out the engine with only 500 miles on it."

Dick A. Hufford, Morris, Minn.: Dick's the owner of a 1997 **Deere 220** stalk shredder. "It works well and does a nice job. It runs much smoother than our old Deere 27 model. It does take a lot of power to pull it, though."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his 1997 **Shurlock Jr.** roll tarp that's designed to fit gravity wagons and grain carts. "We installed it on our Ficklin grain cart and it's a joke. The end flaps are designed to be held down by tarp straps. However, when the straps are unhooked they catch on everything as the tarp is being rolled up. And when I try to unroll the tarp, the straps hook each other so I have to crawl up on the wagon to unhook them. Believe me, you only try this once."

Keith King, Kincardine, Ontario: Keith's "worst buy" was his 1989 **Jeep Comanche 2-WD** pickup. "I should've known that I was in for a rough ride when the oil pan rotted out and the seals went out on the rear axle before the truck was even two years old. At about 40,000 miles the synchronizers started to go out in the transmission.

"Shortly after the power train warranty had expired, the valve lifters started to rattle in the engine. At about 60,000 miles I put new brakes on the truck. None of the parts were available from a jobber so I had to buy all the parts from Chrysler. The front rotors cost me \$100 apiece and the total brake job cost almost \$700. The real killer, though, was when the sides on the bed started to rust out. It was a nightmare trying to get Chrysler to back up its 7-year/100,000 mile rust perforation warranty.

"I drove the truck for seven years and put 84,000 miles on it before trading it in on a 1996 **Ford F-150 4-WD**. The Ford dealer allowed me \$650 for the Jeep and I can't blame him."

Kevin Brunello, Hurley, Wis.: "My 1997 **White 6105** front wheel assist tractor is my best buy. It has a nice smooth transmission, starts excellent even in cold weather, and pulls through the muddiest part of my feedlot without even spinning a tire. The cab has a lot of glass so I have a great view when doing loader work. The **Westendorf TA-28** loader on it is also a best buy. The main loader

booms are low enough that they don't interfere with my vision.

"My 1996 **GM Sierra 4-WD** shortbed pickup is a best buy. It has never failed me after 25,000 miles. Our last two winters have been very fierce with a lot of snow and cold, but the 305 cu. in. Vortec engine always started right up even though we never used an engine heater or parked it inside a building. I think GM and Chevy make the best pickups on the market.

"My worst buy is my 1981 **Deutz DX90** front wheel assist tractor. One problem was that it starts hard in cold weather. The engine has a lot of power - Deutz engines are built strong and you can expect many years of use out of them. I also had a lot of problems with the front part of the power train which cost me a lot of down time and money. On the positive side, the **Westendorf WL44** loader that came with it has been trouble-free. This company makes the best front-end loaders on the market."

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Earl R. Miller, Middlebury, Ind.: "My only complaint is that it starts hard in very cold weather," says Earl, who otherwise is pleased with the 1989 **Bobcat 743** skidsteer loader that he bought used in 1993. "It's equipped with a Kubota diesel engine which has a lot of power and is easy on fuel."

Pat Kenney, Bellevue, Texas: Pat's **Case 1390** tractor equipped with a front-end loader heads his "best buy" list. "It's the most powerful little tractor I've ever owned.

"My **International 966** tractor, which I bought used five years ago, is a best buy. It's equipped with a cab and air conditioning which makes it a pleasure to drive when baling hay.

"My 1989 **Dodge Dakota** pickup equipped with a 3.9 cu. in. 6-cyl. engine has 128,000 trouble-free miles on it and is a best buy. My 1986 **Dodge Ram 250** equipped with a 360 cu. in. engine has 75,000 miles on it. I use it only to pull my livestock trailer and also for general work around my farm. The Dakota gets about 20 mpg while the Ram gets about 13 mpg. Both have been trouble-free."

Harry Nolt, Orchard, Iowa: "My 1996 **New Holland 1411** discbine and 1996 **New Holland 644** "Silage Special" round baler are both best buys. The discbine will cut through any kind of hay. I really like the endless belts on the baler. Heavy, wet silage bales can test the lacers on other balers. I also like the Autowrap tying system - it makes bales that are all the same size."

D. LeRoy Wikert, Emmetsburg, Iowa: "It rides almost as good as a car and is fuel efficient," says D. LeRoy about his 1996 **Dodge 3/4-ton 4-WD** pickup equipped with a diesel engine. "It gets 15 to 20 mpg depending on the weather and use, and it turns short. I like being able to put it in 4-WD on-the-go at speeds up to 70 mph."

Bennie Eugene Street, Lynnville, Tenn.:

Bennie nominates his 1994 **Kubota 5030 4-WD** tractor equipped with a front-end loader as his "best buy". "I use it just about every day. It's the handiest piece of equipment I have. It works good on hills. I use the loader to do everything from stacking hay to hauling, digging, and loading dirt and rocks, etc.

"My worst buy is my **New Idea** disc mower. One or more of the shafts that drive the line of discs 'rounds off' about every 20 to 30 acres. I told the dealer and the company rep about this problem but got no help at all. One mechanic said something was out of line, but no one will do anything about it so I have to tear it down and replace one or more of the shafts myself. I plan to get rid of this mower as soon as I can. I'd never buy another one like it."

Wayne E. Stamm, Monroe, Wis.: "My 1991 **Dodge 350** pickup equipped with a 5.7-liter Cummins engine does everything I ask it to do. I use it to pull a 5 to 6-ton trailer with no problems and can haul loads weighing up to 8 tons. It has more than 105,000 miles. I'm well satisfied with it.

"The 5-speed transmission on my 1990 **Dodge Dakota** pickup went out twice in about eight months when the pickup had about 103,000 miles. Otherwise it's a good pickup. The 4-cyl. engine is fuel efficient."

Mervin E. Dokken, Roseau, Minn.: "My 1997 **Polaris Explorer 500 4-WD** ATV is my best buy. It always starts right up. No problems.

"My 1954 **Allis Chalmers WD 45** tractor still runs like new. Over the years I've spent very little money on it.

"My 1988 **Oldsmobile** has more than 105,000 trouble-free miles and gets more than 30 mpg on long distance trips. It still drives and handles like new."

Oliver Nowotny, La Vernia, Texas: Oliver's "best buy" is his **DeWalt 4 1/2-in.** angle grinder-sander which operates on 110 volts and turns at 10,000 rpm's. "It works like a charm for all but the heaviest grinding jobs. I can use the sanding disc to cut thick plexiglass, and the wire scratch wheel does a good job of cleaning slag from welds.

"My **Milwaukee 9-in.** angle grinder (110-volt, 5,000 rpm's) is a bit heavy to handle but removes metal fast."

Gerald Karas, Massena, Iowa: Gerald likes his 1997 **Dodge 2500** extended cab pickup equipped with a turbocharged diesel engine. "Last winter we used it to pull a 35-ft. fifth wheel trailer to Arizona and Texas. It averaged anywhere from 10 mpg in a head wind to 16 mpg in ideal conditions. We pulled it in fifth gear all the time except when we had to downshift in the mountains. The rear axle has a 3:54 ratio. It rides really nice and gets 20 to 26 mpg empty.

"We previously used our 1991 **Ford 250** Lariat pickup powered by a diesel engine to pull the same trailer, but it never got more than 10 1/2 mpg even though the engine was turbocharged. This pickup had a lot of problems. The company worked it over twice but the transmission still was noisy and vibrated. There were also problems with the cruise control, axle seals, glow plugs, electric door locks, and more. I traded it in at 18,000 miles for the Dodge. Good riddance."

Marvin Mechtel, Page, N. Dak.: Marvin's the satisfied owner of a 1997 **Deere 9400 4-WD** tractor equipped with triple wheels. "I love to drive it. It has a lot more pulling power than the company's previous 8970 model. I used it last year to pull a 54-ft. chisel plow and it used only 1/2 gallon per acre of fuel. I can hardly believe that much power can be delivered on such little fuel."

On the "worst buy" side, "My **Deere 730** air drill was a nightmare to use. Anywhere in the field that was a little wet the discs would mud up, causing them to slide along which left seed on top of the ground. I traded it for a **Deere 1850** no-till air drill. It never mudds up and seeds equally well in conventional or no-till. I love it."

Michael R. Lammers, Leipsic, Ohio: "We've put more than 80,000 miles on our 1992 4-WD **Chevrolet Suburban** with only a few problems - the radiator started leaking and the windshield wipers quit working. Otherwise, no problems. It gets 17 to 18 mpg which I think is great for a vehicle its size. My wife coaches a girl's basketball team and often uses the Suburban to haul the girls around. The team calls it a 'land yacht'."

Stanley Knifer, Webster, Iowa: Stanley's had problems with his **Coleman Powermate** air compressor equipped with a 4 1/2 hp motor and 25-gal. tank. "The motor isn't big enough to start the pump in cold weather. However, it works fine in temperatures above 60 degrees."

Larry Twidwell, Hershey, Neb.: Larry's pleased with his **Ford** pickups. "I had two 1977 F-150 models. One went 267,000 miles and only had the bands tightened once in the automatic transmission. The other one went 192,000 miles with no problems. I had a 1986 model with 99,000 miles on it when I traded it for my current 1994 **Ford F-250 XLT** extended cab 4-WD pickup. It's equipped with a 460 cu. in. V-8 engine, 4:10 rear end, and 4-speed automatic transmission. It's by far the best pulling, riding, and driving Ford pickup I've ever owned. It gets 14.8 mpg on the highway and 10.6 mpg pulling a 35-ft. camper followed by a 20-ft. boat. It handles a 24-ft. livestock trailer with ease. I can't say enough good things about it. No problems after 35,000 miles."

Karl Retzlaff, Morris, Minn.: Karl likes his **Uni-Hydro 85-ton** Iron Worker (MLM Enterprises, 13307 525th Ave., Cosmos, Minn. 56228 ph 320 737-7975). It's an expensive machine, but if you have a busy farm

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shop an iron worker can really help in cutting, punching, and bending steel. I use it constantly in my shop and get good service on punch and die replacements. It has a lot of power, is easy to operate, and saves acetylene and oxygen costs when cutting metal. I wish I'd had it years ago. It's a great machine."

W.A. Dostal, Ossian, Iowa: "My 1997 **MTD 2185** riding mower is neither a best nor worst buy. It's equipped with a foot-operated hydrostatic shifting system which my wife can operate without having to use her left foot/knee. She has a man-made knee which isn't as flexible as the original. One problem with this mower is that it's almost impossible to open the oil drain plug due to its position on the engine case. The plug is located just above the engine frame mount and is too close to the frame for me to install a drain hose on it. As a result, oil drains all over the engine frame, steering linkage, and onto the floor where it makes a big mess. It's impossible to catch the oil because it follows the steering linkage.

"The company says the oil should be