

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

them but are already worn out. No irregular wear, just worn out."

Ruth Campbell, Kingsville, Mo.: "My 1962 Deere 3010 tractor, which I bought used in 2005, was a totally awesome buy. We use it for everything from heavy to light work. We love this old girl."

Y. Z. Gauthier, Arnaudville, La.: "My 2005 Miller Bobcat 225 welder generator is my best buy. It sure came in handy two years ago when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused our electric power to go out."

Ben Hach, Dysart, Iowa: "My best buy is the 40 by 50-ft. farm shop building I bought from Sentinel Building Systems (Albion, Neb. ph 800 327-0709). It's equipped with an overhead door that measures 15 ft. high by 24 ft. wide. I had needed a farm shop for a long time, and when time and money permitted I decided on this building because I liked the bolt-together frame and screw-on steel siding. I'm a nuts-and-bolts type of guy and this system looked good to me. With the help of some friends and family we did the bulk of putting the building up. The Sentinel people were easy to work with, and I'm very happy about the finished product. It's nice to be able to work on farm equipment inside a warm building on the coldest days of winter."

Ken Kortering, Holland, Mich.: "My 1972 Massey Ferguson 12 hp riding mower is my best buy. I overhauled the engine a few years back. Otherwise it has required only routine maintenance. We cut about one acre every time we use it."

Anthony Thiel, Boston, New York: "The Redman standup wheelchair is my worst buy. After being injured in a farm accident and left a quadriplegic in 1990, I negotiated and paid for a Redman Power Chair in January, 2004. My chair was supposed to be delivered in March, 2004 but I didn't get it until June – and it was missing parts. It took until December before a rep installed the parts and I was able to try it. Then it wouldn't recline flat like it was supposed to. Another problem is that it won't go over a 1 1/2-in. lip leading into my garage. It also tips backwards onto its antitip wheels when going up the ramp into my house. I have only used the chair for a total of less than one hour because it's so unsafe."

James Shephard, Valdez, Alaska: A Sun Pipe solved the problem of a dark kitchen corner in James's log cabin (The Sun Pipe



Co., ph 800 844-4786; www.sunpipe.com). "It's a solar tube that pulls light down from the roof. Of course it works only during daylight conditions but it eliminates the need to turn on the lights during the day. Nature pays the power bill. It consists of a silver-coated pipe 9, 13, or 21 inches in diameter with a dome on top and diffuser dome at the base. The pipe can be just about any length. It comes with good instructions for do-it-yourself installation and is reasonably priced."

Barbara S. Ruslander, Quinton, Va.: Barbara's "best buy" is her 2005 Kubota BX 1500 compact tractor equipped with a 15 hp diesel engine, 48-in. front-end loader bucket, and 48-in. belly mower. "I love using a tractor that's small enough to fit into horse stalls

while carrying sawdust bedding in the loader bucket. It's great for mowing around trees, fence posts, and propane tanks. The diesel engine and 4-WD make this a practical and efficient tractor to operate. The engineering and performance are superb. Even the operator's manual is good."

On the "worst buy" side, she lists her 2006 DR pull-type leaf vacuum powered by a 7 hp motor. "This machine has a top heavy design over narrow wheels, which worried me with every turn. Dust leaked from all seams of the box and gagged me. The vacuum hose clogged easily, and when that happens you have to reverse the process and blow a bunch of stuff out, which creates more dust. Then you have to remove the clogged material, re-install the hose and try again."

Bill Hogue, Purcell, Okla.: "My 2006 Dodge 3500 pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine and automatic transmission is my worst buy. I bought it to pull a 24-ft. gooseneck livestock trailer. However, when the trailer is loaded with 10 cows weighing about 1,200 lbs. apiece, this pickup won't go more than 50 mph and the transmission gets hot. The pickup has about 3,200 miles on it, and the dealer told me I needed to put more miles on it before it would run better. It's terribly fuel inefficient and gets only 6 mpg running empty. The dealer said the fuel efficiency should improve as the engine gets broken in."

"In my opinion, anyone who plans on buying a Dodge diesel to pull a trailer would be

"It's terribly fuel inefficient and gets only 6 mpg running empty."

better off buying one equipped with a manual transmission. However, considering this pickup's poor fuel mileage, I think I'd buy a different brand instead. The Dodge help center was no help at all."

Joe Strueder, Franksville, Wis.: "My 1994 Heatmor wood burning furnace does a good job of heating my home and work shop (ph 800 834-7552; www.heatmor.com). I don't even turn on my gas furnace or water heater any more. I haven't spent a dime for gas for 13 years."

Norman Willingham, Susanville, Calif.: Norman's the satisfied owner of a 1939 Ford 9N tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 3-pt. hitch. "I never owned a tractor in my life until I moved out of town to a 1-acre lot on agricultural land. The place was a mess when I moved here, but with the help of my little Ford, my land is now well groomed. This tractor never misses a beat. All my equipment is old like me, but we're all still running good."

T.A. Sampson, Cane Hill, Ark.: He likes his DR Brush Mower. "I bought this work horse in 2001 and have had no major problems with it. My only complaint is that the oil drain is poorly placed and the upgrades on newer models, such as ergonomic hand controls, can't be retrofitted to it."

"For many years I've been happy with the products I bought from Sportsman's Guide, but in the last year or so I've noticed problems with items such as jump starters and tools that need to be recharged. I think the company is acquiring merchandise that has sat around in unfavorable storage conditions for too long."

Tracy Howard, Lancing, Tenn.: "It's a real workhorse," says Tracy about his 2004 Sears Craftsman 4-piece cordless tool set

"Pile Driver" Cleans Up Grain Fast

For moving wheat stored in big piles, Byron Richardson of Brownfield, Alberta, says his Brandt 5000 EX Pile Driver would be hard to beat.

The attachment fits Brandt's grain vac, eliminating the need to shovel. The main job of the Pile Driver is to move grain as quickly as possible. But wheat stored in piles often has some sprouting on the surface, and Richardson found the Pile Driver would first help him skim off sprouted wheat at the edge of the piles.

Richardson sometimes has problems with grain beetles. He gets rid of them with a double vacuuming process, first filling one truck and then transferring the load to another truck. The beetles get blown out of the vac with the exhaust air.

"So far the vacuuming technique appears to be 100 percent successful in getting rid of the beetles," says Richardson.

which includes a flashlight, jigsaw, reciprocating saw, and sander. "I've used these tools to build two porches, a barn, and various other projects. I've also helped other people with their projects. These tools work good and stay charged for a long while."

"My remanufactured Yanmar loader tractor is my worst buy. Right before the 4-month warranty expired, the loader hydraulics went out. I was using a box blade when the hitch broke. A ring in the fuel injector system failed which resulted in a loss of compression, and now the hydraulic cylinders on the loader are leaking again."

Terry Schutz, Rock Falls, Ill.: Terry likes his Hawkins DG Paddle Reel for down corn (ph 800 382-6178 or 308 995-4446; www.hawkinsmfg.com). The Schutz farm had been hit by strong winds early last August. Terry and his son, Shane, used two Deere combines equipped with 1293 headers. One header had a conventional reel and the other had a Hawkins reel. According to Terry, the conventional header had to be



cleaned out about 50 times, but the Hawkins reel didn't plug up even once. One feature Terry likes about the reel is that when it's not needed it can be mechanically raised up out of the way."

James McGowan, Russell Springs, Ky.: James likes his 1991 New Idea disc mower. "I've always kept up a regular maintenance schedule. Recently we used it during the fall to cut hay that was down and very thick, and with all the hours on this mower I thought it would fail to cut. But it did a great job."

Doug Owens, Jamestown, Ky.: "My 2004 Harley Davidson Sportster motorcycle is my best buy. I bought it slightly used in 2004 with about 1,900 miles on it. It was equipped with a lot of extras. This is my first Harley. It gets about 45 mpg and is a lot of fun to ride."

Wesley C. Taylor, Mineral, Va.: "I'm happy with my Kioti DK35 tractor. It has eight speeds forward and backward. It starts easy in cold weather and is a pleasure to drive."

"I like my 2000 GM 3500 crew cab pickup equipped with dual wheels. It has more than 60,000 trouble-free miles on it."

"My 2005 DR pto-operated wood chipper can handle tree limbs up to 4 1/2 inches in



Byron Richardson uses his Brandt 5000 EX Pile Driver to move wheat stored in big piles.

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diameter with no problems. It came with extra blades. No problems so far."

Thomas E. Guess, Waverly, Va.: "My Woods RD7200 rear discharge finishing mower is my best buy. I use it to cut 6 1/4 acres of grass every week from late April until October. This mower is rugged, dependable, and leaves a smooth golf course-type finish. I can go two seasons on one set of blades for about \$50. I'd highly recommend this machine to anyone."

Arnold Eden, Woden, Iowa: "My Deere 4030 tractor is my best buy. I bought it used about three years ago with 1,288 hours on it. It had been owned by a retired farmer on a small acreage. I use it to operate a feed mill, round bale fork, blower, auger, silage wagon, and for other small jobs. This tractor is trouble-free and is an excellent starter during the winter. It doesn't have a cab so it's easy to get on and off. My wife loves it, too."



Art Duvall, Pana, Ill.: Art likes the interruptible standby generator he bought from the Shelby Energy Company (Shelbyville, Ill. ph 217 774-2311). The generator is designed to start up automatically whenever the power is cut off for any reason, running on an engine fueled by propane gas. Duvall, a cattle and goat producer, says he has used the unit twice in recent months. Once the power went off for no particular reason, and once it went off during an ice storm. He and his wife like the assurance of having heat and light no matter what the weather is doing.

"Something especially attractive about the new power unit is that it's timed to run automatically for a short period every seven days. That means the unit will be ready to work whenever it's called upon. Too often people with generators never give them a test run until an emergency comes. Then, quite often, the generator won't work because over time moisture builds up in the generator, making it inoperable."

Jim Dannen, Hampton, Iowa: A 2001 Dodge Ram 3500 quad cab, dually 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins 5.9-liter diesel engine rates as Jim's "best buy". "I bought this pickup used with about 130,000 miles on it. The diesel engine has a lot of

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