

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Mega Cab pickup. "It has a lot of power and torque and a roomy cab. It's much more comfortable to drive and has more user friendly controls than the Ford diesel we had before.

"My 2003 **Ford** pickup equipped with a 6.0-liter diesel engine is my worst buy. It caused us nothing but trouble. It rode stiff and the engine was always having problems. I'm a third generation Ford owner but never again. This pickup ran great when it was running, but it wasn't reliable."

Barry Nestle, Alvin, Texas: "When I traded my **Kubota** 1500 for a new **Kubota** BX23 compact tractor, I did it to get a backhoe. But I ended up with a whole lot more. I can use the backhoe and the loader together,



and later remove the backhoe to pull a 4-ft. Bushhog, posthole auger, belly mower and box blade. It handles them all well.

"Since the company where I worked closed down, I have found part time work with the tractor. I put in fences, dig ditches and mow fields. I've mowed 3-ft. tall grass with the Bushhog, taking a 2/3 bite with each pass.

"When my daughter wanted to build a house behind mine, I used the backhoe to dig ditches for water lines, build two drainage ditches and three French drains.

"I also built two attachments for it. One is a cable plow for burying wire. It gets cable down a foot below ground. I also built a grapple fork for the loader that attaches in place of the bucket.

"The grapple fork has fingers cut out of 3/8-in. steel plate with 1 1/2-in. square tubing for framing. The top jaw is in two sections, with each one operating on a different cylinder to open and close them. That way the unit can twist if I am grabbing something that is uneven side to side.

"The pitch is controlled by the bucket cylinder. To get the hydraulics for the jaw cylinders, I had to put a tee on existing lines and run it through an extra control valve, but it works great. When opened completely, it has about a 2 1/2-ft. jaw opening, tip to jaw tip.

"I've picked up telephone poles, brush and all kinds of stuff. My daughter had a bunch of sheet rock left over from building the house. I just picked it up with the grapple and threw it into the dumpster. It saves my back and a lot of time. I even tore down an old barn with it.

"This little Kubota has been my best buy ever."

Vernon Stolte, Watertown, Wis.: "The water distiller I bought from **Waterwise Co.** is my worst buy. It sat in the box for two or three months before we tried to use it. But when I put it in use it worked only for about six months or so before the boiler gasket started to leak. Not long after that it started to shut off in mid cycle. This went on for a while, and then it quit working altogether. I called the company, and they said to send the machine back and they'd check it out.

"I paid about \$400 for the distiller, and it cost just under \$30 to send back. The company called me and wanted \$98 to repair the unit. They just about completely rebuilt the machine, without honoring the warranty, and then sent it back to me. We've had the machine in use for seven or eight months now, but the same problem is happening all over again."

Raymond Larson, Grinnell, Iowa: A

1962 **Deere** 24T baler rates as Raymond's "best buy". "Over the years I've used this baler to make thousands and thousands of bales, yet my total repair cost has been less than \$150."

John Bodlak, Emerson, Neb.: "My 2006 **Remington** electric 14-in. chainsaw is my worst buy. The bearing on the chainsaw drive sprocket went out and cost about one third as much as the saw itself. The problem is that the bearing is too small for the load it carries."

Adam Dufour, Salem, Ind.: "My 2004 **Deere** 270 skidsteer loader is my worst buy. The engine oil filter was loose and leaking when the dealer delivered the unit, and there was a problem with a hydraulic fitting. The seat belt safety switch failed the first day of use. At 100 hours the left side wheel motor began turning only half as fast as the right side, and it took the dealer eight weeks to solve the problem. When he finally got it fixed the unit was plagued with leaks - hydraulic oil and anti-freeze - because it had been taken apart and put back together so many times. I sold the unit before it was even a year old."

Walter Betzel, River Falls, Wis.: Walter's the satisfied owner of a 2005 **New Holland** TC35 DA tractor equipped with super steer and 4-WD. "I love the super steer system - it makes any job I do with this tractor fun. It has a lot of power for its size and uses less fuel than my riding mower. The quality of the entire tractor is great."

On the worst buy side, he lists his 2004 **Cub Cadet** 5284 and 2005 **Cub Cadet** 6284 4-WD tractors. "The 5284 went through four hydro transmissions in only six months and 35 hours. They couldn't get another transmission for a few months because they're made in China so I traded it for the 6284 model. However, it had the same transmission trouble - the hydro wouldn't hold up going from forward to reverse."

Brian Buysse, Ghent, Minn.: He nominates his 2006 skid loader-mounted **Loftness** Kwik Pik rock picker as his "best buy". "It has a hydraulically reversible reel that separates rocks from dirt, which we really like. The reel sweeps rocks into the bucket, instead of us having to drive the bucket into the dirt."

Robert S. Young, Jerseyville, Ill.: "Our 2006 **Deere** 9560 combine is our worst buy. We used it for only about 80 hours when a line came off the fuel injector and caught fire. It burned the wiring off the engine. We ordered a new fuel line and it came the next day but it was the wrong one. They sent another one out and it was wrong, too. We finally located one in Vincennes, Ind. So we drove 190 miles one way to pick it up. Our insurance paid to get the combine going.

"Then one day I was cutting beans and backed up and saw smoke in the stubble. I got out the fire extinguisher to put the fire out. We let the combine sit and called the dealer. They came out but couldn't find anything wrong. After we got done harvesting my son was cleaning the combine when he took the shield off and noticed two burned places on the side of the feederhouse. The bearings were out on the dust fan. Now the combine is sitting in the shed and hasn't been repaired."

Larry M. Wilkerson, Griffithsville, W. Va.: "My all-time worst buy is the **Trane Exterior** forced air heating and cooling system that we purchased for our farm house. It's only six years old but already the heat exchanger has had to be replaced twice and the circuit board panel has also been replaced, along with two other repairs. The first heat exchanger was replaced when the unit was only a little more than one year old. At one time it was out of service for 30 days.

"My best buys have been three **Toyota** Tundra pickups from different model years. I haven't had a single problem with these pickups. They're the first vehicles I've bought new or used without some kind of problems.

"I'm also pleased with my **Kubota** 900 UTV. It's a wonderful, versatile machine. Its 3-cyl. diesel engine is so fuel efficient that I almost forget to put in any fuel. It can haul tremendous loads with little effort, and the hydraulic dump bed works with the greatest of ease."

Mike Bollendorf, Saulsbury, Tenn.: "More than 32 years ago I bought a used **McCulloch** 610 chainsaw for \$100 and have used it on our farm ever since then. During a severe ice storm in 1994, I and others ran the saw day and night removing trees.

"I accidentally drove my tractor over this saw twice and had to make new housing parts with J.B. Weld. I've also replaced the spark plug, air filter, chain and bar several times. The muffler is burned out and I couldn't find another, so now it's very noisy.

"This machine has never failed to start and never requires more than five pulls. If I haven't used it for some time I pour the old fuel out and replace it with a fresh gas/oil mixture. A local fire department has an abrasive saw, used to cut car bodies open, with the same McCulloch engine on it that has served them well for more than 25 years. Neither saw has ever been in a repair shop."

Paul E. Maurice, Auburn, Mass.: "My worst buy was my **Harbor Freight** Chicago electric dual Mig 151 welder. While the price was attractive, the machine wasn't. It's made mostly of model airplane plastic and conked out after consuming less than one spool of wire. The flimsy wire feeder isn't user serviceable, nor is the hard-wired gun.

"The only thing worse than the welder itself, was the dismal customer support following its failure. We've had a terrible time trying to get our money back."

Joe Bahe, Stanley, Iowa: "I'm happy with our **FarmerGPS** guidance system (ph 780 990-4052; www.farmergps.com). It runs on a Windows laptop computer and connects to any GPS via a standard serial cable. We read about it in **FARM SHOW** (Vol. 30, No. 1).

"It cost only a fraction of what other GPS systems cost."

"We bought this software last spring to use when spraying no-till soybeans and it did a good job," says Bahe. "We mounted a laptop computer in the cab, which made viewing easy. It maps and has an integrated lightbar. This system is also very affordable and costs only a fraction of what other GPS systems cost."

Jim Weitzel, Middlefield, Ohio: "My **Kuhn** 15-bale accumulator and grapple is my best buy. It has allowed me to almost triple the amount of hay I can put up in a day. It has a very simple design and is reasonably priced. It takes the drudgery out of making small square bales."

Jeff Hepola, Cassville, N.Y.: "It's by far the best mower I've ever owned," reports Jeff about his **Ferris** zero turn riding mower (Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y. ph 315 495-0100). "The engineering is 100 percent. It's a rugged machine that's built for a lifetime of use."

Don Charlton, Athabasca, Alberta: Don's happy with the **Solid Steel** steering stabilizer kit he installed on his 2002 Dodge

1-ton pickup (ph 306 842-4346; www.solidsteel.biz). The kit is designed to provide additional support to the steering sector shaft and eliminate sector shaft play in the steering box. It also helps keep the pickup frame from flexing at the steering box mounting point.

Installation takes about a half hour and requires no drilling or welding.

"The improvement made by this steering stabilizer kit was remarkable," says Don. "The company's service was absolutely first class, with easy-to-follow instructions regarding installation. I was impressed with the exceptional service."

Andrew L. Naylor, Johnson, Vt.: "I think it's the best 4-wheeler ever built," says Andrew about his 2002 **Kawasaki** Prairie 650 4-wheeler. "I've always been a Honda fan, but I decided to try out this Kawasaki model and am glad I did. I use it almost every day on my farm, which is on quite steep land. It has more than 3,650 miles on it but I haven't had to work on it yet. It has required only routine maintenance. It's an awesome machine."

Jacob S. Miller, Millersburg, Ohio: Jacob's impressed with his 2006 **Honda** 2,000-watt inverter generator which he bought for \$975. "It runs quiet and is also fuel efficient. It weighs just 46 lbs."

Art Gomez, Scott City, Kansas: "Our 2006 **Briggs & Stratton** 5,500-watt generator is our best buy. Being without power is no picnic, as our parents found out when they lost their power. We bought this generator and avoided the trauma."

J. Pat Branch, Kimberly, Idaho: "My **Ryobi** 18-volt cordless drill and cordless saw, which I bought at Home Depot, are my best buys. They were reasonably priced. I use them about once a week. When the battery is charged they have plenty of power."

"My **Dell** computer was given to me by the Veterans Administration so it isn't really a worst buy. But I don't have much luck whenever I try to get service over the phone. I often have to go through three or four people and wait for an hour at a time. One time I was transferred to 12 different people in 2 1/2 hours. I have all this documented."

Dale Hoffman, St. Ansgar, Iowa: "My 2000 **Honda** Recon 250 ATV works great for picking rocks whenever the ground is too wet for doing other field work. Also, it'll easily handle a 15-gal. mounted sprayer. It requires only routine maintenance and just runs and runs.

"My **Lincoln** battery-powered grease gun burned up three chargers the first year because the batteries wouldn't hold their charge. I paid \$30 per charger and \$35 per battery. Finally I quit using it."

Robert A. Young, Chatham, Mich.: "My **M&W** 4407 round baler is my best buy. It has made more than 10,000 bales with only a few minor problems. It's a good, simple baler."

Ralph Parks, Wynnewood, Okla.: "My **Case** 442 garden tractor, which I bought used 15 years ago, is my best buy. It has required no major repairs. It doesn't use any oil and still has the original spark plug. It starts instantly."

James Dentici, Weirsdale, Fla.: James is happy with his 2005 **Kubota** L31330 HST tractor. "I use this tractor for bush hogging, finish mowing, disking, and moving dirt and manure piles. It's powerful enough for most farm chores. Great company support.

"My 2006 **Troy-Bilt** Super Bronco is cheaply made ever since the company was taken over by MTD. The steering mechanism loosened after only one month, and the front wheel wobbled after three months. There was a burned oil odor after seven months."