

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

2005 **Buick** Century is my best buy. After looking at some small compact cars with a rating of 28 to 31 mpg on the window sticker, my wife and I looked at a full-sized Buick at our local dealer. Its window sticker also ad-

“This car is loaded with options, rides like a dream, and gets more than 30 mpg.”

vertised 30 plus mpg. After checking prices with other Buick dealers we bought the one from our local dealer. The car is loaded with options, rides like a dream and actually gets more than 30 mpg. If a full-size car can be this fuel efficient, why can't smaller cars get twice the mileage?"

David L. Weedon, Chebanse, Ill.: "In November of 2004 I installed a corn stove that I bought from **Golden Grain Stoves** of Sterling, Colo. It's the best buy I ever made. The first winter I used 196 bushels of corn at \$1.96 a bushel to heat my 2,950-sq. ft. house, and only 185 to 190 gal. of LP gas at \$1.26 per gallon. Last winter I used less than 175 bushels of corn at \$1.64 a bushel, and less than five gallons of LP gas at \$1.65 per gallon. Once my stove gets lit with a half cup of wood pellets, it only gets shut down maybe once a week so I can clean out the firepot. I do clean the stove twice a day to remove the clinkers, but I never lose the fire. We let the stove run all the time whether we're at home or not. The temperature in our living room where the stove is located stays at about 82 to 84 degrees, while our bedroom which is located 75 feet away stays at 64 to 68 degrees. I use my furnace fan to circulate the air through the entire house, including the basement."

Bob Langlois, Princeton, Mass.: "My best buy is my 1992 **Dodge** Power Ram 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins diesel engine, which I bought used with about 331,000 miles on it. I've done just about everything with this truck, but it always comes back for more. I was a little uneasy about having an automatic transmission, but it has performed great whether I'm plowing snow, using a log skidder, at a truck pull, playing tug-of-war, etc. Now it has about 360,000 miles and is still taking a beating. I'm 18 and have owned the truck for almost two years. It has required only basic maintenance, such as the replacement of a fuel pump and a front bearing, which isn't bad for the mileage. It starts every day and gets me from point A to point B and everywhere in between. I couldn't ask for a better truck."

William D. Kellett, Gaylesville, Arizona: "I like the complete line of lubricants - motor oils, greases, fuel additives, etc. - sold by **Schaeffer Mfg.** (St. Louis, Mo. ph 800 325-9962). "The lubricants help my equipment run smoother, cooler and the grease stays on bucket pins much longer. These products are a must-have on our farm."

Henry J. Schmidt, Kaukauna, Wis.: "My 2001 **Honda** Recon 4-wheeler ATV has been trouble-free. All I do is add fuel and perform the required maintenance. I use it to plow snow during the winter, and it always starts no matter how cold it is."

John Glessner, Greenville, Ohio: John says the 1999 **Dutchman** Class C motorhome he bought in 2001 is his "worst buy". "This unit had always been stored inside when not in use, but last fall and this spring the ceiling paper started separating from the plywood. I made four calls to the manufacturer and was told they had never heard of this happening before."

Jim Kottinger, Mount Shasta, Calif.: "My **DR** 6.75 hp trimmer/mower is my best buy. It's several years old. The Briggs & Stratton engine on it always starts easy, and the strings are heavy enough to wear well. It works much better than a Weed Eater. The company now offers a self-propelled model that would be easier to use, but it wasn't available when I bought this one. The strings are easy to replace."

Harry Zettlemoyer, Tamaqua, Penn.: "My best buy is **J-B Weld** (J-B Weld Co., Sulphur Springs, Texas ph 800 529-3530). I used this product to build up a worn cast iron axle housing on my tractor, and to build up a steel tiller shaft which was worn down due to a frozen bearing."

On the "worst buy" side, "My **Belarus** 310 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader is my worst buy. At 200 hours the hydraulic pump on it quit working. Now at 400 hours, the second pump has failed. The pump seems too small for the loader. The front axle broke and the bushing chewed up the cast housing. Apparently the set screws weren't turned in far enough to keep the bushing from turning. The dealer wanted to sell me a whole new gear unit, explaining that he couldn't get just a separate housing right away as there was a long waiting list for them. So I used **J-B Weld** to build up the housing.

"The broken axle also caused a driveshaft flange to get chewed up. I solved the problem by getting a flange with four holes instead of six, and then paying \$30 to have six holes drilled into it. The brakes are almost impossible to adjust, and they're too weak to handle filled tires as well as the weight of a front-end loader. Another problem is the lever for the 3-pt. lift is hard to control and can't be moved slowly."

George Bannister, Gratiot, Wis.: "My 1952 **Allis Chalmers** WD tractor is my best buy. I bought it used in 1996 with a **Wagner** front-end loader on it and have used it ever since with only minor problems. It still has the original clutch and rear tires on it and has required only routine maintenance. It has been used hard for many years but now is semi-retired like me. It's a great tractor."

Dennis Winkler, Clinton, Mo.: "I like my 2000 **Deere** 4 by 6 Gator. My grandson and I use it to rake hay and to spread seed and harrow it in afterward. We also use it to mend fences and to haul wood and hay in 4-WD. It'll go almost anywhere."

William Grancorvitz, Cloudfroft, New Mexico: A 2004 **Honda** Element car rates as William's "best buy". "This car has plenty of interior room and a lot of power for a 4-



cyl. vehicle. It handles mountain travel well. The rear seats fold away or can be removed. This car rides good but is noisy on rough roads. It gets 22 to 30 mpg on 86 to 87 octane gas."

L. Rodgers, Lavenham, Manitoba: "I like my 2001 **Ford** F-350 4-WD pickup equipped with a 7.3-liter, Powerstroke diesel engine and 6-speed transmission. It easily pulls my 24-ft. **Norbert** triple axle cattle trailer, which is also a best buy (Norbert's Mfg. Ltd., Glenboro, Manitoba, Canada ph/fax 780 853-4406). We've used it to haul more than 1,000 head a year without a single problem."

Darell Cecil, New Haven, Ky.: "My 2004



Burned pickup, at right in photo, stands among the ruins of Howard Woehrer's machine shed.

Pickup Fire Destroyed Equipment Shed

"Until our machine shed burned down, I didn't know Ford had a defective cruise control switch in many of its vehicles built from 1994 to 2002," says Howard Woehrer, Centertown, Mo.

"My 1999 F-250 was parked in the shed on June 17, 2006, along with about three-fourths of our farm equipment, when it caught fire and burned everything to the ground. The state Fire Marshall was called in and he determined the fire started in the dash area of the pickup - most likely the cruise control switch. The problem is that even with the ignition switch off, the wire leading to the cruise control switch is always 'hot'.

"After talking to other people and checking on the internet, we discovered there was a huge problem with fires nationwide. The problem switch is in Ford pickups, SUV's and some of their cars.

"Before our fire, Ford had issued a recall for the switches in the F-150 but not any other models. Had I known the problem existed, I would never have parked the truck inside. It caused the total loss of our 56 by 60-ft., 3-

year-old shed as well as our combine, cornhead, grain cart, 6-row planter, 15-ft. bushhog, grain truck, 122 hp tractor, ATV, compact tractor, baler, disc, and field cultivator. We also lost all our tools, welders, and many parts and supplies. We had replacement value insurance so I've been out shopping for used equipment. Needless to say, I'll never own another Ford."

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Editor's note: On August 3, 2006, Ford announced a recall of 1.2 million additional trucks, SUV's and vans built between 1994 and 2002, including Howard Woehrer's truck. Ford said the recall was due to the faulty speed control deactivation switch, which can corrode over time, overheat, and ignite. Last year Ford recalled 3.8 million pickups and SUV's, including the F-150. Dealers install a fused wiring harness to the switch to prevent fire if the switch ever corrodes.

DR trimmer does a good job of cutting large weeds and brush but goes through too many strings. The strings are made from hard plastic but come out too easily.

"My 2004 **Bush Hog**, which I bought used in 1999, works great around our farm."

Ed Woods, Weiser, Idaho: "It's the most accurate bandsaw I've ever used," says Ed, pleased with his **Delta** 14-in. bandsaw. "It comes complete with a stand and blade tension arm. I use it for general cutting and also to cut aluminum aircraft parts."

John Graham, White Salmon, Wash.: John says his 2002 **Chevrolet** Avalanche is his "best buy". "I've used this vehicle to haul everything from six people to 24 sheets of plywood, and have even hauled eighteen 2 by 6's on a custom-built lumber rack that I use with it. It can pull a combined load of 19,600 lbs. up a six percent grade as fast as I want, and I work it hard on all kinds of jobs in between. It's more fuel efficient than any of my previous pickups and also rides better."

Sue Ann Brown, Rippey, Iowa: "The 2006 **White** 16-row planter we bought is one of the best investments we've ever made. We wanted to plant no-till because of all the dry weather we've been having and this planter did a perfect job. One great feature of the White planter is its ability to lock up seed boxes, making point rows easy to plant."

George H. Kehm, Corning, Calif.: "My 2003 **Mantis** rototiller cuts through tough, hard soil. It always starts right up in all weather conditions. No maintenance problems."

Tim Force, Montrose, Colo.: "My **Cody**

Mountain saddle is made of top quality materials (Colorado Saddlery, Denver, Colo.). It has held up to the rigors of everyday stress. The company has placed straps, O-rings and other supports right where you need them. The price-to-quality ratio of this saddle is fantastic. Also, it looks classy.

"My 2005 **Ponderosa** 16 by 16-ft. livestock trailer is my best buy. The quality of the workmanship is deplorable. Razor sharp edges remain where the square tubing was cut and electric wires were placed across those edges. No undercoating was sprayed under the trailer; just one bolt holds the spare tire; welds are poor; there are minimal floor supports; the center gate retainer is just a piece of chain; and gravel guards are inadequate."

Bruce Stambaugh, Rudy, Ark.: "It's a low maintenance, dependable tractor," reports Bruce, pleased with his 2001 **Kubota** 4310 4-WD tractor equipped with a cab and front-end loader. "I can operate this tractor comfortably all day long. It's powerful for its size and fuel efficient."

Robert J. Senn, Ettrick, Wis.: "Our **Deere** 420 lawn tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower deck is a best buy. We bought it used seven years ago with 508 hours on it and use it to mow about 1 1/2 acres per week. It makes our lawn look like a carpet and has required only routine maintenance. It's a great buy.

"The tractor came equipped with a 3-pt. hitch so I used 12-in. steel wheels to build a barbed wire spool that slides on and off to string out the wire. It really came in handy

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