

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

that I could install 30-year-old Cub Cadet spindles and bearings (because you can grease the bearings) and also new Cub Cadet ZTR blades. The mower works better with these blades; however, the baffles still need to be changed.

"I contacted the company and was told that I was mowing too fast. But low gear and half throttle was as fast as I ever went when mowing during the spring.

"I still have the Swisher; however, our new **Bush Hog 2561** does our mowing now. It's as much fun to use as my GTO was to drive in 1966."

John Barton, Saco, Montana: John likes his **Medway** toilet "riser" that raises any toi-



let 4 in. off the floor (Medway Corp., Worthington, Ohio ph 800 817-3118; www.medwaycorp.com). "Three years on crutches due to a bone infection convinced me to buy this unit. It eliminates most of that last 'free fall' to the seat and makes it a lot easier to get up."

Robert Mickelson, Fall River, Wis.: "It has 290,000 miles on it and counting, with no major engine or transmission problems," reports Robert about his "best buy" 1997 **Dodge Dakota 4-WD** pickup. "This has been a workhorse truck for me, as I use it in my crop consulting business. It goes from field to road to church on Sundays. Even the paint job on it still shines."

Werth Johnson, Rogersville, Mo.: "My 2005 **Poulan** chainsaw is my worst buy. As soon as I brought it home I found it very hard to start, so I took it back. The dealer gave me another one that started okay for about three months until the 90-day warranty expired, and then it wouldn't start either. I went back and talked to a different salesman, who said a lot of people have the same trouble."

Roger Larson, Lebanon, Mo.: "My 1989 **Cub Cadet 1872 Super** garden tractor equipped with a 60-in. mower deck is my best buy. This unit has about 1,200 hours on it and is practically bulletproof. I occasionally use it to go bush hogging. Its Kohler gas engine was overhauled about 100 hours ago. The tractor's Sundstrand hydrostat transmission is also very tough."

A. J. Sampson, Cane Hill, Ark.: "If anyone out there is shopping for a prefab cabin, **Park Cabins, Inc.**, in Florida is one company to steer clear of. I learned about this cabin through Woodalls, a major camping publication. I had problems with a leaky shower stall, stripped toilet seat screws, an uninsulated hot water heater, peeling vinyl tile in the guest loft, peeling tiles in the loft, a leaky roof, problems with the kitchen cabinets, poor breaker box location, and inadequate wiring. My electrician used the word 'firetrap' to describe the wiring."

Don Lindsey, Los Gatos, Calif.: "My **Hewlett Packard Pavilion** computer is one of my worst buys ever. I recently took the computer to a computer expert who told me he couldn't help me because it doesn't have all the hardware. The thing this computer does best is to say, 'This program has performed an illegal function and will be closed down'. I think it would make a great boat anchor."

Jack Hyde, Maryville, Mo.: A book called **To Pay or Not to Pay** by Stanley G. Hilton, rates as Jack's "best buy". "This book taught me to stand up to creditors and collectors, and to even sue them if necessary. It's the best \$5 I've ever spent. On farms there are always going to be occasional cash crunches, when you can't pay what you owe on time. So just say 'no' and stay in business."

Stephen Beck, Earlimart, Calif.: "My 2005 4-WD **Ford Ranger** is my best buy. I bought it to replace a 1988 Ranger that had about 235,000 miles on it. I like the mid size of the Ranger. It has plenty of power, rides well on and off road, and is fuel efficient."

Goodyear tractor tires are my worst buy. I've never worn out a Goodyear tire. They always fail long before old age sets in."

Ron Fuleki, Butler, Ind.: "My worst buy is my **Burgess** insect fogger. I've bought both the electric and propane-powered models, and both failed miserably. The current propane model quit working after the third time I used it. I bought a new pump kit for it but it still refuses to work."

Kenneth E. Branch, Valley View, Texas: "I recently ordered two bottles of **SEALube** from New Tech and the stuff works like magic (New Tech International, Fraser, Mich. ph 800 434-9192; www.seallube.com). I put some in a power steering system that had been leaking about a pint of fluid every two months and it totally stopped the leak. I plan to put some in the transmission box on my 1972 GM 3/4-ton pickup. It loses most of its transmission fluid over a month or so of driving. I have to add fluid about every week."

Mike Balko, Indiana, Penn.: "In August 2005 we bought a **Manco Masters of Motion** go-cart for our children at Wal-mart. It's our worst buy. It's a good thing I'm a mechanic, because this go-cart has had a lot of problems. I've had to work on it a lot just to keep it running and have spent more than \$300 on maintenance. I paid \$1,500 for this go-cart and it was money ill-spent."

Harold Barton, Silver Lake, Minn.: "I still can't believe there are people who harvest corn without them," says Barton, inventor of **Corn Shields** that mount at the ends of corn heads. "I'm biased but every year they



pay off. And with the increased size and speed of combines, no machine should be without them."

The fiberglass **Corn Shields** divide corn rows and deflect loose ears on the end rows back into the head. They've been on the market for 14 years and are in use on thousands of corn heads across North America. They were recently taken on by May Wes Manufacturing (www.maywes.com; 800 788-6483).

Barton harvests corn with a 12-row Geringhoff "Rota-Disc" header that shreds stalks as it goes.

On 800 acres of corn he harvests each year, Barton figures he has saved an average of \$2,400 a year. "That goes up to as much as \$4,000 or more in bad years with a lot of down corn or high winds," he says.

Richard L. Adams, Raleigh, N.C.: "I've had nothing but trouble with my 2001 **Husqvarna** riding mower. First the brakes locked up, then the spindles holding the blades wore out, and then the transmission started to make a grinding noise whenever it

was under load. When I siphoned out the fluid (there is no drain plug), it was very dirty. The electric clutch went bad, and then the clutch switch shorted out. Now the engine just quits running for no reason at all. After it cools down, it'll start up. I paid \$2,000 for this mower and thought I was getting a good quality machine that would last a long time. But what I got instead was a piece of junk. I wish I had never bought it."

Colton James, Stella, Neb.: "My 1985 **Deere 111** riding mower is my best buy. This mower runs well every time I operate it, and I use it for a lot of different jobs - pushing snow, mowing, spraying, and hauling things around. It still has the original engine. The only repair it needed was to replace the drive belt pulleys."

Ronald Hamann, Isabella, Mo.: A **Sears LT1000 18 hp** riding mower rates as Ronald's "worst buy". "The poorly designed spindle housings on the mower deck are made of aluminum. I've had to replace them several times because they break where they mount to the deck. Sears stores keep a large inventory of these spindle housings in stock because they break so often. I think the company should offer a retrofit kit to take care of the problem. No more Sears yard equipment for me."

Steve Byler, Belleville, Penn.: "It's by far the best investment I've made in years," reports Steve about his 2005 **St. Croix** corn burning stove (Even Temp, Waco, Neb.; info@eventempinc.com; www.eventempinc.com). "I live in an old, leaky, uninsulated brick house. When I saw how high oil prices were going to be last year, I only bought half



the oil I would normally need for the year and then bought this stove. As it turned out, I was able to reduce my oil consumption by 67 percent so this stove paid for itself in just one winter. I'm amazed at how clean and efficient it works. I had been supplementing my oil heat with a wood/coal stove, which was a lot of work. I had to dump a huge ash pan every morning, bag up coal every chance I could get at the local feed mill, and cut wood. I just don't have time for that. I'm a grain farmer so I can get shelled corn any time I need it. I used 196 bushels of corn last winter. I'd recommend this stove to anyone."

Sid Miller, Sparta, N.C.: "I've used my 1977 **Massey Ferguson 1105** tractor to do everything from plowing to pulling a 5-yard scraper. I've never had to spend much money on it other than for routine maintenance."

"My **Sears Craftsman 42-in.** riding mower has been loud and uncomfortable to operate. Last summer the 17 hp Briggs & Stratton engine on it blew up for no apparent reason. I'll never buy another Craftsman."

Leroy Oberholtzer, Greenwich, Ohio: "My 2003 **HITP Mig 120** welder has performed flawlessly (ph 800 872-9353). The company also has a good team of experts available on the phone for technical assistance."

Wyman R. Webb, Ottumwa, Iowa: "I had a pleasurable experience when ordering lawn mower blades from a company called **Agri-Direct** (Micro, N.C.; ph 919 284-3315; www.agri-supply.com). I ordered three blades from the company and, after receiving them, realized that one was the wrong size. I called the company, explaining that it was my mis-

take. They told me to keep the blade and send me another one free of charge. How many times does that happen nowadays?"

Chris Reinke, Morrison, Tenn.: Chris likes the replacement V-belts he bought from **Jaydee Enterprises Inc.** (Willoughby, Ohio ph 800 989-0162). Whether I need a belt for a hay roller or a combine, 99 percent of the time the company will have it in stock at a savings of up to 40 percent."

Meg Steensland, Mt. Gilead, Ohio: "It has done everything I've asked it to do," says Meg, pleased with their 2005 **Kubota BX23 21 hp 4-WD** diesel tractor loader/backhoe. "I use it to haul feed, manure, fence panels, pallets, water buckets, move snow, and so forth. A neighbor used it recently to bury dead livestock. It's easy for inexperienced drivers to use. The only flaw is the ring pins that are used on the 3-pt. arms - they're hard to put on and remove."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists the 2004 **Central Pneumatic** brad nailer/stapler he bought from **Harbor Freight**. "I was able to drive in only 18 to 20 brads before it failed. My neighbor looked at it and when he opened it up, parts in the gun barrel fell apart. I ended up throwing it away."

Ernest Lokken, Weyburn, Sask.: "I recently purchased a new rust removal product called **Release**, available at most hardware stores. I used it for the first time on an old pair of pliers, and I couldn't believe all the rust that came out as I worked the pliers. Another surprise was when I used it on seized grease nipples on my front-end loader. I removed the nipples, shot a little Release into them, and the nipples took grease nicely right away."

C.S. Exon, Jefferson City, Mo.: "My 2003 **Mantis** rototiller is lightweight, easy to start, and easy to handle. I use it to do a variety of jobs. It has served me well."

Bruce Thompson, Amenia, N.Y.: "My 1999 **Toyota Tacoma 4-WD** pickup has more than 150,000 miles on it with no problems. It works every day without complaint."

James O. Nelson, Itasca, Ill.: "My best buy is my **Ariens** self-propelled mulching mower. It'll mulch anything it can get on top of. I wouldn't hesitate at all to buy another one."

"My **Snapper** self-propelled mower is my worst buy. This mower has a hard enough time just cutting grass, let alone mulch it. I'd never buy another one."

Dennis Rood, Clarksville, Ark.: Dennis likes the 1 1/8 hp, 880-lb. double cable capacity electric hoist that he bought from **Harbor Freight**. "I attached the hoist to a trolley assembly on an 18-ft. by 6-in. overhead steel I-beam in my shop. I've used the hoist to pull auto engines, to lift one end of an ATV when replacing axle bearings, to lift a riding mower when replacing blades, and to load and unload heavy items from my pickup. It makes handling material and equipment a much easier and safer job."

"My 2005 **Harbor Freight 230-volt, 36-amp** plasma cutter is my worst buy. I bought it with a 1-year extended warranty at extra cost. From the start, it wouldn't cut for more than several seconds at a time. Yet air would continue to blow for minutes, and the power switch wouldn't turn it off. After making six phone calls and spending a half day on hold, I was finally provided with a replacement unit. At first it did everything it was supposed to do. But after I used it several times, the power switch went out and then it would no longer cut. I now have lost my desire for a plasma cutter."

Norman Marshall, King George, Va.: "I like my **Echo** grass trimmer much more than the Homelite model I used previously. Also, my **Echo** power blower is a best buy."