

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

dealer wouldn't do anything about it."

James McGowan, Russell Springs, Ky.: An MTD riding mower equipped with an 18 1/2 hp engine and 46-in. deck rates as James' "best buy." "I traded for it two years ago and have used it since then to mow roadside lawns. It has a deep deck so it does a good job of discharging grass. It can cut anything I can drive on. The only repair it needed was to the deck wheels, and they had good reason to break off because I drove over a lot of rough ground.

"**Mad Dog** drill bits are my worst buy. I had to return them to the company twice. They sent more bits but they all had the same problem. My wife bought a set of drill bits for \$20 from another company that work better than this set, which cost me \$80."

Larry Moranda, Eureka, Calif.: "The quick-tach bracket I bought from **Jesse Machine Works** for my Deere 145 front-end loader is my best buy (Jesse Machine Works, Chico, Calif. ph 530 342-4379). The hitch converts your loader into a quick-tach. It attaches to your loader permanently.

"My **Saginaw Tractor** 3-pt. hitch for my Deere B tractor is also a best buy (ph 810 638-5787; www.saginawcountytractor.com). It comes preassembled and is raised and lowered by the tractor's internal hydraulic lift."

Bill Fuller, Kinder, La.: "My 1999 **Deere** 8200 tractor has a lot of power. Also, it drives and handles nice.

"My 2004 **Deere** 6615 tractor has a much-improved transmission over the company's 6605 model.

"My 2003 **GM** 2500 pickup equipped with a 6.0-liter engine is an excellent work truck with a lot of towing capacity. My 2004 **GM** 3500 pickup has a lot of power and towing capacity, and it accelerates well. It has a fairly nice ride.

"My 1999 **Polaris** Sportsman 500 has been trouble-free."

Philip Colbentz, Country Comfort, 396 Gordon Rd., Aua, Ill. 62907 ph 888 561-8232: Philip uses a **Harman** PC 45 corn stove and has also become a dealer. "Harman has addressed all the issues that have plagued other corn burning stoves. It's the first to have a practical self-ignition system that really works well, even with 15 percent moisture corn. It uses a 400-watt element, which means that no special wiring is required. Takes about five minutes to ignite.

"The cleaning interval has been greatly reduced and electronics are advanced, allowing more consistent room temperature. Conventional thermostatic controls provide a three degree plus or minus swing in room temperature.

"In addition, the stove has advanced safety features. It's easy to use, efficient, and well designed."

John Vaught, Somerset, Ky.: "A 1/2-in. hammer drill made by **Cummins Pro Industrial Tools** is my worst buy. It cost only \$19.99, but I didn't even get one hole drilled before the gears stripped. I took it apart and used the chuck with a 3/8-in. Skil drill to finish the job. When you buy cheap, you get cheap."

Roy Cude, Trinity, Texas: Roy's happy with his 1998 **Dodge** 1-ton Laramie SLT dually truck. "It gets the job done. We use it to pull a 35-ft. trailer through Colorado, New Mexico, and a lot around Texas. We change the oil and do a maintenance check every 3,000 miles. I've spent a total of less than

\$5,000 over the years, counting oil and filters."

Earl Conrady, Hartsburg, Ill.: "I bought a **Sears** Coldspot 19 cu. ft. freezer in July 1950 and it has been running ever since. The only repair it has ever required was to a small fan motor."

Ed Gorham, Gladewater, Texas: "My 2002 **Yanmar** 1700 tractor was hard to get on and off. I sold it with only 22 hours on it and bought a 1949 8N, which works great."

"My 1996 **Dodge** 2500 pickup is my worst buy. The dealer put the wrong size tires on it and there were problems with the rear axle seals. The pickup was in the shop about 40 times during its first 60,000 miles. I finally got the problems fixed and it now has more than 126,000 miles on it."

Ingvald Moen, Hot Springs, Ark.: A 56-in. **Granberg** Alaskan chain saw lumber mill rates as Ingvald's "best buy" (Granberg International, Vallejo, Calif. ph 866 233-6499 or 707 562-2099; website: www.granberg.com/alaskaintro.html). "I bought it in 1999 and I've made enough lumber with it to build



a house. I'm now in the process of cutting 1/2-in. siding. It has performed flawlessly. If you're looking for a chain saw mill, this is the one to buy."

Jim Schilling, Graf, Iowa: "My 1986 **Deere** 330 riding mower equipped with a 16 hp **Yanmar** diesel engine is my best buy. The engine has a lot of power and can pull our large homemade wood splitter up some good-sized hills with no problems. It has a lever-action hydrostatic drive that gives us infinite speeds and doubles as a cruise control when we find the speed we want. Hydraulic lift makes it easy to raise the deck. The machine has a 4 1/2-gal. fuel tank so we can cut our large yard three to four times before we have to refill the tank."

Pete Schilling, Gaylord, Minn.: "I don't like my 2003 **Woods** 1190 post hole auger. When I bought it the salesman told me it had an internal slip clutch. But it turned out to be a shear bolt machine and the first time the bolts sheared it destroyed the auger extension which was built too light for an 18-in. auger. I wanted to return it but the dealer refused to take it back. No more Woods products for me. I use this machine to make a living putting up Silverstream hoop buildings, and I can't wait until I can afford to trade it off."

Bruce Moorhead, Susquehanna, Penn.: "My 1994 **Dodge** Grand Caravan LE 4-WD mini van is my best buy. It works great in snow - one time I was able to drive it up a steep hill with 10 inches of new snow on the ground. It has more than 148,000 miles on it but has required only routine maintenance.

"I like my **Mantis** tiller and **Mantis** sprayer. Both machines are more than 10 years old. They're well-built."

Darian Sullivan, McBee, S.C.: Darian's impressed with his **Troy-Bilt** high wheel string trimmer equipped with a 6 1/2 hp **Briggs & Stratton** engine. "It has performed flawlessly and really cuts well. It starts easy and is well balanced, making it easy to push and a pleasure to operate. The trimmer strings are easy to replace."

William Rietveld, Chicago Heights, Ill.: "My **DeWalt** 14.4-volt, 1/2-in. cordless impact wrench is my best buy. It's a must-have

Glen Forest, Potomac, Ill.: Glen says his **Stalk Stompers** keep cornstalks flat, eliminating a trip through the field and reducing damage to tractor tires. (May Wes Mfg., ph 877-788-6483; www.may-wes-mfg.com).

"In the past I used an I-beam mounted on front of a tractor to flatten stalks when I disked or chiseled, to save tires. **Stalk Stompers** can just be left in place on the combine for use each season.

"I prefer flattening stalks as compared to chopping them because there's less loose residue on the ground. They seem to flow better through our tillage equipment since they're still anchored in the ground. They just pull through.

"I added extra **Stompers** under the combine so I can flatten all rows, not just the rows ahead of the combine wheels. I've had them in place for three years with no problems or repairs required.

"Cost to install the **Stalk Stompers** was \$145 per row."



Glen Forest added extra **Stalk Stompers** to the bottom of his combine.



All rows are flattened by **Stompers**.

tool for farmers and ranchers. No air compressor or air hose needed and yet it has enough power to break a 3/8-in. bolt and loosen a 5/8-in. nut."

Jerry Jenkins, Omak, Wash.: Jerry's happy with his 1978 **Dodge** D-50 2-WD shortbed pickup equipped with a 6-cyl. engine. "I bought it from an irrigation company. Their shop maintenance records showed it had a little more than 200,000 miles on it. I've put another 130,000 miles on it with only minor repairs. The really good part was that I paid only \$550 for it. It's also fairly economical to operate."

Dwight Shiels, Stoughton, Sask.: "My 2003 **Chevrolet** Silverado 4-WD Z-71 pickup equipped with an off-road package is my worst buy. It has had a lot of problems. The cruise control has quit working three times, the 4-WD switch quit working, and the air conditioner failed. After the air conditioner was repaired, the blower motor quit working. One time the brake pedal stuck to the floor and I had to be towed. The rear brakes wore out quickly. I was told that rocks got in the brakes and that I needed to install stone guards. Sounds like they're telling me that I can't drive an off-road truck off the highway?"

Kevin Lys, Fort Smith, N.T.: "My **Schulte** XH1500 brush cutter is an excellent value. I'm a contractor in the Northwest Territories of Canada and in the past 12 years I've owned several of these machines, cutting about 3,000 miles of right-of-way. They greatly outperform the competition. If a company ever built a pickup with this quality, I'd own a whole fleet of them."

Dan Sabo, Mount Sterling, Ill.: "Last November I bought a **Haier America** chest freezer with a 1-year warranty. I was only able to use it for four months before it broke down. I called the company six different times during a three week period, and every time they promised that a repairman would come out within 48 hours. However, no one ever showed up. I was finally told there isn't a repairman in my area because it's too remote. They said that if I could produce a sales receipt they'd give me a full refund. I sent them the sales receipt but never got a refund. Finally I took them to small claims court and won a judgement, but I still haven't been paid. My recommendation is that if you don't live in New York City where the company is headquartered, then don't buy their products because they won't honor the warranty. I'd appreciate hearing from anyone who thinks they can help me."

T.E. Kirk, Edgerton, Mo.: "I think tree lounge deer stands are dangerous in general,

particularly when climbing up tree trunks. I bought a stand from the **Tree Lounge Co.** and they wouldn't refund my money, as they advertised they would."

Dean Sharp, Rexburg, Idaho: "It's just an all-around handy little tractor," says Dean, pleased with his 2000 **Deere** 4400 compact utility tractor equipped with a hydrostatic transmission, front-end loader, and backhoe. "I was reluctant to get the hydrostatic transmission, but my two sons talked me into it and I'm sure glad they did. I can move dirt or snow so fast that passersby often stop just to watch. My only complaint is the loader's control lever isn't well located. I think this problem has been taken care of on the company's newer models."

Jim Schroeder, Bend, Oregon: "My 2004 **Hesston** 4590 center-feed baler is a great machine. It makes nice bales, turns short, and it's small enough to fit through small gates. It handles well on the road since it trails right behind my tractor. We use it on small farms. This baler saves a lot of time compared to side-feed models. I can't imagine using anything else."

Raymond Baillargeon, North Battleford, Sask.: "I've been using **Pest Chaser** electronic rodent repellers for about 30 years and they've kept my buildings mouse and rat-free for all that time (Comfort House, Newark, N.J. ph 800 359-7701; www.comforthouse.com). They're very reliable and are designed to last for five to seven years, but I've had them last for up to ten years. I recently paid \$19.95 for a new model. It's maintenance-free and I like not having to deal with poisons or dead animals. The ultrasonic sound waves can't penetrate solid objects so the company recommends putting one **Pest Chaser** in each room where you have a problem."

Shannon Rupnow, Reeseville, Wis.: "My 1999 **Deere** LT 133 lawn tractor always starts and has been trouble-free. The blades hold a sharp edge so well I only have to sharpen them once a year."

On the negative side, "I love **Matco** tools because they never let me down, but I always had problems with slow delivery of their products. I complained to the company and they told me the problem was with my distributor. So I changed distributors, and now the stuff I order is delivered to my door the same day it arrives at the distributor's place."

R. Engel, Phoenix, Arizona: "I bought a 1950 **Deere** A tractor that needed repair work. It was a fun project to work on, and plenty of used and new parts were available. Now it's a great running tractor.

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