

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
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Duane L. Stinemetz, Marysville, Ohio: “Last May my 2000 Deere 7810 MFWD tractor burned up in a fire. I had just parked the tractor in my brother’s shed and was standing behind the tractor talking when we saw smoke coming out from under the side of the hood ahead of the cab. Three minutes later the flames were as high as the cab, and only a half hour later the tractor was completely burned. I’ve never seen anything burn so fast in my life. The shed caught on fire and burned to the ground, along with a tandem axle truck. It took only about 15 minutes for the fire department to arrive, but by that time it was too late to save anything.

“Investigators from my insurance company came out the next day. They said the fire probably started when either the hose clamps or the rubber fitting on a hydraulic oil line worked loose, allowing oil to leak out under pressure next to the tractor’s hot exhaust muffler and catch on fire. They could tell by the color of the metal that the fire was hottest in that part of the tractor. I think part of the reason the tractor burned so fast is that the oil line is under pressure, which caused oil to constantly feed into the fire. Another reason is that this tractor, like many models made today, has a plastic hood and fiberglass fuel tanks. The material melts when it gets hot.

“The tractor had only 550 hours on it and

was and see a 7810 model working in the field, I stop and tell the operator what happened to my tractor.”

Ben and Daniel Padgett, Kings Mountain, Ky.: “Our 2002 Koyker 210 front-end loader was easy to install and is easy to operate. It’s a best buy. The loader’s 2 1/2-ft. hydraulic lift cylinders provide plenty of lifting power.

“Our 1994 Dodge 1/2-ton 2-WD pickup is a best buy. It has more than 200,000 miles on it with no major repairs other than a new torque converter. These were not easy highway miles - most of them were made with a trailer in tow that was hauling a Ferguson 383 tractor.”

Charles O. Schmidt, Wadena, Minn.: “My 1996 Deere 425 riding mower is my best buy. It starts and runs like new and does every job we ask it to do. It’s also a pleasure to drive. I’d buy another one if something ever happened to this one.”

Gary Sampson, Freedom, N.Y.: A Sears Craftsman 18-volt Hi/Lo variable speed drill rates as Gary’s “best buy”. “My wife and son bought it as a Father’s Day gift. I was skeptical when I saw that it was made in China, but I really like it. It drives a 3-in. screw into a 2 by 4 like nothing, and the variable speed drive works great. Recently I used this drill outdoors on a building project. The temperature was only 20 degrees but the battery lasted for four hours of hard use. When the battery ran out I had a spare battery all ready to go. The quick charger that comes with the drill charges the battery in only one hour. This drill is also built tough. It slid off a tin roof that we were working on but the battery didn’t even come off and the drill kept right on working.”

Doug Andersen, Marquette, Neb.: “My 2001 Apple I Mac computer is my best buy. It has a G-3 processor with OSX. It works every day without crashing. I’ve used it for 18 months without a single failure, never needing a new driver and never needing to add cards. My Mac is far superior to Windows-based PC’s I’ve used in the past. PC computers cost less but weren’t a bargain because they spent more time in repair shops than on my desk.

“My Deere 5300 tractor is a best buy. My only complaint is with the starter, which is built too light and had to be replaced. Otherwise this tractor has been hard working and reliable. It has about 1,700 hours on it.

“My worst buy was an order I made to J.C. Whitney. The products were okay but for a few months after my order arrived, I would get at least two phone calls a week from the company with special offers. I always refused the offers and told them not to call back, but the calls continued for months. If you order from J.C. Whitney, be sure not to give them your phone number on the order form.”

Arnold K. Anderson, Terry, Montana: A 1996 Stihl chain saw equipped with a 20-in. bar rates as Arnold’s “best buy”. “I bought this saw used from a nephew, who had run it for less than 10 hours. It starts easy and runs for a long time on a tank of fuel. It’s a lot less firesome to use this saw than the previous one I owned. The weight of the saw is enough to slice through most logs. It lets me cut wood with very little effort.”

Raymond C. Tatro, Baldwin, Mich.: “My 2001 Woodmaster outside wood burning stove works well and is my best buy. We use it to heat our home (about 1,800 sq. ft.) and garage (another 1,000 sq. ft.). It has no problem keeping both the house and garage comfortably warm and has been trouble-free. When installing the furnace and plumbing we had some questions so we called the factory. We received helpful advice and were able to complete the project in a timely manner. This company provides great service.”

Haskell W. Carr, Twin Falls, Idaho: “My

was still under warranty, but Deere claimed no responsibility and wouldn’t help at all. My insurance covered about 60 percent of the tractor’s cost. The insurance company called Deere but got the runaround. The truck that burned up was not insured.



“When the fire department came out they couldn’t get too close to the tractor because its tires started exploding, which created a dangerous situation. The tractor had dual wheels on back and single wheels on front. There wasn’t any fluid in the tires which makes them much more likely to blow up. I’ve never heard such explosions. Every time a tire blew up it sounded like a cannon was going off. The force of the explosions actually caused the tractor to move.

“My 7810 was my main tillage tractor and was one of the best tractors I’ve ever owned. It’s a 160 hp model that’s valued at about \$98,000. To finish the season I rented a couple of tractors. I’m 65 years old so I probably won’t be able to buy a new replacement tractor. This incident made such an impression on me that whenever I’m driving on the high-