

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

by Harold Johnson
Editorial Director

Mark Newhall
Editor

Bill Gergen
Associate Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Michael T. Mayer, Manhattan, Kan.: "I'll never recommend a Ford pickup to anyone I like," says Michael, disgruntled owner of a 1989 F-150 XLT Lariat 4-WD equipped with a 5.0-liter V-8 engine and 5-speed manual overdrive transmission. "The pickup wasn't aligned right from day one. The engine didn't use any oil in the first 1,000 miles, but now it uses one quart every 800 miles and is getting worse. At 1,500 miles a bearing went out on the transfer case. Now it has 5,700 miles and things aren't improving. It's supposed to get 17 mpg but it gets only 13 mpg at best. I bought the pickup out of town and made the mistake of asking the local dealer to repair it. He had it for three days, leaving me to find my own transportation, and did poor service work. He said that according to Ford regulations, the oil usage was within tolerance levels. In fact, Ford says it's tolerable for an engine to use one quart of oil every 600 miles. I put 114,000 miles on my 1982 Chevrolet diesel pickup and never used one quart of oil in 3,000 miles. The dealer says he'll look at it again when it has 7,500 miles. If Ford had a 'satisfaction guaranteed or your money back' offer, I'd jump at it in a heartbeat."

Ambrose Metzger, Shelby, Ohio: "My Stormor overhead drying bin is a real lemon.

Palmer likes his Shop-Vac wet and dry shop vacuum (Shop-Vac Corp., 2323 Reach Road, P.O. Box 3307, Williamsport, Penn. 17701-0307). "The detachable blower works much better than compressed air to clean chaff and weed seeds from machinery. However, it does clog up. There should be a detachable screen on the intake."

James Myhre, Cowichan, British Columbia: James says his 1987 New Holland 411 discbine is a "best buy". "It cuts much faster than my sickle mower-conditioner and leaves clean, even stubble. If I hit a rock I just sharpen the blades with an angle grinder. After two full seasons of use, I haven't broken a single blade."

"My 1987 Deere 716 forage wagon is a worst buy because the front axle collapsed."

"Another worst buy is my 1986 Deere 4050 tractor. It had only 900 hours when a gasket began leaking hydraulic fluid. I had to lift the cab and split the tractor. It wasn't covered by the warranty."

Wayne Arnold, Gansevoort, N.Y.: Wayne has had good luck with his 1988 Deere 2755 tractor equipped with MFWD and a model 1245 loader. "We use it to load wagons out of our bunker silo. The front wheel drive provides great traction. It also allows us to turn at the end of the field without braking."

Roger Schoen, Montague, Calif.: "My Briggs & Stratton engine, model 190702, is a real piece of junk. The engine vibrates so bad that the bracket securing the gas tank to it breaks constantly. The manufacturer is of no help at all."

Roger's "best buy" is Farnam Aerator series 6000 microporous subsurface irrigation pipe (Precision Porous Pipe, Inc., Rt. 2, Box 116 C, McKenzie, Tenn. 38201). "It saves about 50% of my irrigation water, keeps the soil surface dry, eliminates surface evaporation, and reduces herbicide use."

Evan Wank, New Riegel, Ohio: "My International 1440 combine makes it a joy to farm. Once you learn how to adjust it, nothing can touch it."

Evan also likes his Honda TRX 250 4-wheeler. "It's totally trouble-free."

His "worst buy" is a Deere 22A pressure washer. "Something is always going wrong on it."

David Nelson, Nelson, Minn.: "I had to replace the factory bumper and install stronger mounting brackets," says David, owner of a 1978 Ford F-250 6-cylinder 4-speed pickup. "It has 124,000 miles and still runs well."

Derwin Jensen, Hutchinson, Minn.: Derwin likes his 1987 Dodge Dakota pickup. "It's been trouble-free over 46,000 miles and gets 17 to 20 mpg."

Dennis Koep, Sauk Rapids, Minn.: "It's gone 117,000 miles with no problems," reports Dennis, pleased with his 1986 Dodge Ram 50 pickup equipped with a 2.6-liter engine and manual transmission. "It gets 25 to 32 mpg loaded and about 25 mpg empty. Handles and rides nice, and the tires wear well because the alignment stays set."

Dennis' "worst buy" is his 1987 Winnebago Chieftain motorhome. "Alignment problems wore 25 to 55% of the rubber off the tires before they had 5,000 miles. The heater and air conditioner don't work right and water leaks through the windshield and windows. The pump broke and all of the water faucets leak. The ceiling is cracked and buckled and the brakes are poor."

Jay Gear, Osseo, Mich.: "It makes it easy to weld light gauge steel, stainless steel, and aluminum. With a little practice, even someone with little experience can do

When I bought it the sales representative told me it would make my dryer obsolete. But it only made me realize how good my MC 600 dryer really is. The Stormor bin is way overrated and overpriced. Running it is like driving a car without any speedometer or other gauges because you just have to guess at the corn's moisture content. You can't store corn in it for very long because there's no way to dry grain evenly. You just hope that the wet corn mixes with the dry corn and results in the right moisture content, which is almost impossible. The bin is on its third aeration fan. The first two fell apart, and only one of them was under warranty. The salesman was understanding, but the Stormor people could care less. When I try to use a grain leg to fill the bin, steam from the bin goes up the pipe and condenses, allowing water to run into all of the other bins. To solve the problem, we have to put a plastic bag on the pipe for each batch of grain we dry. The bin roof is junk. None of it fit together properly and all edges were as sharp as a razor and crudely made. I think all of the dies they used to build the roof were worn out."

Harry M. Zacher, Maddock, N. Dak.: "It handles nice but it's a real gas hog," says Harry, owner of a 1989 Dodge Dakota 4-WD pickup. "I've taken it back to the dealer many times but he says nothing is wrong."

Harry's "best buy" is his 1988 Oldsmobile Delta 88 automobile. "It gets up to 35 mpg."

Palmer Nelson, Grassy Butte, N. Dak.: