

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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Kenneth V. Grimm, Deep River, Iowa: "My worst buy is a 1986 Massey Ferguson 656 'auto weave' baler which is the same as Vermeer's 605J. It listed for almost \$19,000 and has been the biggest disappointment of any equipment I've ever owned. I never had a single trouble-free day of baling during the first summer of custom work. I spent more time unplugging it and straightening belts than I did baling. Vermeer recalled it and added a self-contained hydraulic system. That had been the only part of the baler that I hadn't had trouble with. They call it the "smart baler" but every time I get it set to where it will make a decent bale, it seems to lose its smarts. Also, they would not extend the warranty after it was rebuilt. I have now given up on the auto weave feature and operate this baler manually."

Dale Nichols, Callaway, Virg.: He nominates his 1986 Honda TRX 350 4-wheeler as "best buy". "It goes just about anywhere and you can depend on it to work every day. We mount a snow blade on it in winter and pull a flatbed wagon with a load of hay or feed."

On the negative side, he's had trouble with his 1986 Wagner electric paint sprayer. "It never worked the way it was advertised."

Manuel D. Nix, Buckner, Ariz.: He lists

ing. I now have 2,000 hrs. on it with no mechanical problems."

Douglas Still, Monte Vista, Colo.: "I like the speed of my Epson Equity I computer with an internal 2 meg hard disk and the reliability of the entire Epson line of computers and printers. The only negative thing about my new Equity I is that the AT keyboard on it is not as handy to use as the keyboard on the Epson QX-10 that I use for all of my farm records such as payroll, accounts payable and budgeting."

Terry Riegler, Sparta, Mo.: "I haven't bought anything new for years but the worst machine I ever bought was a New Holland 1010 square bale stacker. I'm a mechanic but I couldn't make it work in 7 years of trying. My wife says two girls can stack more hay than that stacker. It cut bale strings at the pickup and would not pull away from a stack without tearing it down in the process. The dealer told me 1010's cannot be fixed but he took it in on trade."

Terry says his "best buy" machine is a 1979 Hesston 5800 round baler he bought used. "It had been sitting outside but after a new belt, a new bearing and one new sprocket, the baler worked just as good as new."

"I also have a Homelite C-5 chainsaw that we bought in 1963. It still runs and I use it each winter. The engine has never been opened up. It's only had tuneups and carburetor work."

Terry also has a "best buy" tractor. "I've used my Massey Ferguson 180 diesel tractor with a 248 engine for the past 10 years with only one breakdown. That happened last summer when the throw-out bearing went bad. I changed it myself."

Rex Sullinger, Ridgeway, Ohio: Rex had bad luck with Ag Pac farm accounting software for his Apple computer. "I ordered this software over the phone and received it promptly. I found it complicated to set up the account codes and I could not get immediate phone support from the company. They let me return it but have not yet refunded my money."

On the positive side, he's happy with DuPont's Preview for broadleaves in soybeans. "My local dealer thought I should try it and he was right. Even though we had a 14-in. rain in June, we had few 'escapes' at harvest time."

George E. Holmes, Trumansburg, N.Y.: "We've had almost no breakdowns or plugging problems with our 1979 Gehl 99 forage blower. We fill seven silos each year with 1,000 tons of haylage and 550 tons of ear corn. It can really blow."

Arnold Heeren, German Valley, Ill.: "We have a General Electric kitchen clock we bought new in 1950 that keeps perfect time. Our Whirlpool 21 cu. ft. freezer bought new in 1955 has never had a service call. And we can bale an entire season with our New Holland 273 baler without missing a tie."

Gordon Briley, Johannesburg, Mich.: "We like our Deere 3150 4-WD tractor," says Gordon about his "best buy".

Bradley O. Knight, Cadiz, Ohio: "After 3,200 hrs. use, our 1978 Deere 4040 with Powershift transmission and cab still drives like brand new. I've had only one minor breakdown, a cracked fuel line at 2,500 hrs. Operating expenses have been limited to tires, batteries, oil and filters."

On the negative side, "Our 1982 New Idea 406 hay rake is our worst buy. The bars run too fast for the ground speed and the drive belt broke three times in 100 acres. My dealer said they were bad belts but wouldn't

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his 1986 Deere 530 round baler and his 1987 Deere 8-ft. mower as "best buys". "Both of these machines have worked well. They're maintenance-free and the delivery and set-up by our dealer was super."

Glen Libbrecht, Fargo, N. Dak.: "My worst buy" is a pickup-mounted Fargo sprayer bought new in 1981. The booms were chain suspended causing them to bounce with every little bump in the field. The Briggs and Stratton engine vibrated excessively causing linkage parts to wear rapidly. The regulator and pump leaked the year after I purchased the sprayer. It had no sump in the tank so I couldn't spray out the last of the mix. There was only one small fill hole on the tank and the cap for that didn't fit too well. I now have self-leveling booms on it and had a sump and extra fill hole put in. After much frustration, it's now a decent sprayer," says Glen.

"My best buy ever is my Deere 4040 tractor bought in 1979. This tractor has always started and run well for me. Other than a faulty water temperature gauge, I've had no trouble with it."

"I also like the Linde 225 wire welder I recently purchased. It has heat settings for both small and large jobs. I get better welds in less time with it than a stick welder."

Doug Allin, Atwood, Ontario: He's happy with his 1982 Ford 7700 FWA tractor. "Front-wheel assist works great and this tractor gets very good fuel economy at 3 to 3.5 gal. per hour while plowing and cultivat-