

Best & Worst Buys

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parts for it were expensive. I got rid of it and bought a 1995 New Holland 790 forage harvester which I really like. It's much easier to service and pulls easy."

Gary Nonamaker, Cedar, Kan.: "I purchased a United Farm Tools 565 grain cart last year. Early this year we were notified by our dealer that the cart needed a company update. I was very surprised when two men from the company came to our farm and installed a complete set of new augers on the cart. I wish everything I buy would have that kind of service and company followup. I'd recommend the company's products to anyone."

"I'm well satisfied with the three Case-IH Magnum tractors I've purchased since 1988. They're all excellent tractors."

K.J. Thornton, Didsbury, Alberta: "My worst buy is my 1990 AgBag Silopress XP111. It was evident after delivery that it wasn't a new piece of equipment and that it didn't have all the parts. The machine had to be modified in order to get it into running order and it hasn't performed satisfactorily in any way. Attempts to get the problems resolved have proven futile. I wonder if other readers have had this problem."

Clark C. Phillips, North Collins, N.Y.: "We've used our Kemper 3000 corn silage head to harvest over 300 acres of corn for six years with just one repair - a broken shaft - and almost no maintenance. It's a simple, well-built machine and our best buy."

Kevin Jones, Mound Valley, Kan.: "It's simple and easy to operate and makes nice, tight bales," says Kevin, pleased with his 1994 New Holland 660 autowrap round baler.

"I'm disappointed with my 1995 Deere 450 grain drill. The depth gauging press wheels are hard to adjust and I can't get it to cover the seed adequately. It just scatters seed on top of the ground. It was put together wrong when it was delivered so I had to change some things. But it still doesn't work right."

Michael O. Scheel, Goodman, Mo.: "I bought a heavy duty pickup bumper equipped with twin hydraulic bale spears

"Depth gauge wheels are hard to adjust and I can't get it to cover seed."

made by Bramco of Fairview, Okla., and distributed, installed, and serviced by Jespersen Mfg. & Sales, Inc., Neosho, Mo. It's my best buy. The spears can be easily removed with pins to eliminate bed clutter. I can use it to haul and feed round bales from the comfort of my pickup cab. An additional inexpensive unroller attachment allows me to unroll the bale. I've used it for five years with no problems. All I do is grease it. Custom painted or chrome bumpers are available.

"My 1986 Ford F-250 pickup equipped with a 6.9-liter diesel engine is my worst buy. Not one gauge still works on it and some gauges haven't worked for five years. The oil pressure gauge, both fuel gauges, tachometer, glow plug controller, ignition switch, emergency brake, 6-volt lights, and

water fuel separator all don't work. Parts for it are expensive."

"My 1981 Ford F-150 equipped with a 300 cu. in. 6-cyl. engine is a better pickup by far."

Randy A. Shannon, Broadus, Mont.: Randy says a Belarus 562 tractor with front wheel assist is one of his more disappointing buys. "I've had to rebuild the gear box between the front drive shafts twice. It's hard to start at temperatures below 35 or 40° F and the air conditioning has never worked," he says. "Still, it's easy on fuel, easy to work on, and has good visibility from the cab. We bought it new in 1988 and it now has 875 hours."

Scott Thompson, Harlan, Ind.: "One of my worst buys was a Deere 940 Danish tine field cultivator. We spent a lot of time replacing bearings in the set of rolling baskets on back. We're trading it off for a Remlinger harrow."

Sid Powell, Rocheport, Mo.: A John S. Barnes Corp. (2222 15th St., Rockford, Ill. 61125; ph 815 398-4400) 12-volt hydraulic power unit for operating the bale spear on his pickup is one of Sid's "best buys". "The hydraulic pump and ram are much faster than the spike and winch I used for years to feed hay. The unit was easy to install, it's more dependable, and is fairly economical."

Mike Ruppert, Wapakoneta, Ohio: "A Bio Tech canvas livestock shelter (AM-CAN, R.R. 2, Box 103, Bloomington, Ill. 61704; ph 309 663-5153) I built in July of 1994 is my 'best buy'. It's cost effective and excellent for raising hogs. It was simple to put together. No electricity is needed, saving a lot of overhead expenses. We finish 200 head of hogs at a time in our 78 by 30-ft. shelter. I like the first one so much I'm planning to put up another this year."

Alex E. Wolter, Holcombe, Wis.: "My 'worst buy' is the Polaris 435 Magnum 4-WD ATV I bought new in 1995. After only three days a tie rod end fell off. The engine was so full of oil, that some was sucked into the air filter box. Poor engineering in the front end (front wheels are too far out at the bottom) makes short turns impossible. All 400 series Polaris 4-WD's have this problem. My dealer called the company to complain on my behalf, but he says if he complains too much he'll lose his franchise. So I called Polaris three times to complain myself. All I got was their answering service and no answer. Then I wrote a letter but still got no answer. I've been a loyal Polaris customer for a long time, but no longer if this is the way they do business."

Richard Kouba, Regent, N. Dak.: In Richard's nearly 40 years of farming, a 1987 Deere 610 27-ft. single depth control chisel plow has "aggravated" him the most. "The first day in the field we couldn't get it in the ground with 16-in. sweeps on. The dealer told us to put some washers on the top bolt between the sweeps and shank. We did, but then one or both wings would suck into the ground and push up the middle section. Soon the dealer closed his door and our problems were transferred to another Deere dealer. Currently, the chisel works after a fashion, but we still never know what depth it will choose to work at. I am not happy, and never have been, with this machine. In my opinion, Deere should have recalled it and

melted it down into plowshares."

Daniel Leinonen, Cokato, Minn.: One of Daniel's "best buys" is a 1995 Belarus 572 65 hp tractor. "It has a well-made, comfortable cab with a heater. Front wheel assist really makes all the horsepower useable," he says.

George E. Hawker, Jr., Frederick, Md.: "My Case-IH 5140 tractor has an excellent, powerful engine that doesn't smoke at all on hard pulls. The cab is comfortable with excellent visibility," George says. "I also like my Knight 3300 Reel Auger TMR mixer. It does a better job of mixing than our old three auger mixer and a four auger mixer we tried before buying this unit. All the material in the box moves with no dead spots."

Clarence P. Mess, Watertown, Wis.: Clarence liked a Knight "Mini Auggie" TMR mixer so much that when his first one wore out, he bought a second one. "Service is outstanding. The factory service manager has met me at 10:30 at night to take me to the factory to get parts. We've never missed a feeding."

John Meisch, Altura, Minn.: Two of John's "best buys" are a 1979 Deere 4440 tractor and a 1993 Deere 3950 forage chopper. "The tractor has plenty of hydraulic power, shifts easily, and is a pleasure to

"Now I can hook up in no time. Unhooking is a snap, too."

drive," he says. "The design of the forage chopper is simple, making it easy to maintain. It does a great job chopping material."

Dean Witte, Vernon, Colo.: "One of my 'best buys' is a 1975 Deere 4430 tractor," Dean says. "It has 8,000 trouble-free hours on it. It still uses no oil."

Mike Pahls, Menifee, Calif.: Mike's "best buy" is a Century 105 90 amp dual purpose wire feed "Mig" welder. "This one makes my old 'buzz box' look like an antique," he says. "It's easy and convenient to use. Makes my welds look real fancy."

Geraldine Lulth, Emerson, Neb.: "I used to have to back up five or six times to hook up the tractor and wagon until my husband bought our Agri-Speed Hitch (Bergman Mfg. Inc., 2984 Quail Ave., Arthur, Iowa 51431; ph 800 677-8329)," Geraldine says. "Now I can hook up in no time. Unhooking is a snap, too. I simply pull on the cable to release the device, then drive forward and the wagon is unhooked. No more getting out of the cab to pull pins."

Bruce Koonce, Caldwell, Idaho: "It's the most aggressive hay machine I've ever seen," says Bruce about a 1994 New Holland 22550 swather. "It will cut heavy first cutting hay which is laid flat without plugging. It simply does an excellent job and we've had no trouble with it."

"We've had trouble with the computer on a Deere 4555 2-WD tractor we purchased with 440 hours on it. It shuts the hydraulic system down as well as most of the gauges. We also recently had to replace three injectors."

Doug White, Unity, Sash.: "Eight is enough, and that's the number of Deutz tractors I've owned. It's now time to switch brands. When the clutch went out of my 1988 Deutz 7145 with only 1854 hrs., it was the last straw. My Deutz tractors were

bought between 1962 and 1989. If Deutz would have continued with the great quality they put in my 1977 model 100.06, they would never have had to sell out to Agco. The newer and bigger models were harder on fuel and more expensive to maintain. The 100.06 has 104 hp. and uses just 3 gph. but my 7145 with 145 hp. used 6 gph. Last summer I traded the 7145 for a 1982 Versatile 835 that's a best buy. At 235 hp., it uses just 8 gph. and when I use it to pull the same loads I pulled with the Deutz 7145, it only uses 4 gph. It has an 855 cummins 6-cyl. engine which starts and runs great. It's a simple, well-built tractor."

John Tierney, Minneapolis, Minn.: The front hubs on his 4-WD 1994 Ford Ranger pickup failed at 41,000 miles, just after the 36,000 mile warranty expired. "They should not have failed so soon, especially since the truck is used primarily for highway driving. I don't abuse it at all. The dealer ended up paying \$500 of the \$1,000 repair cost, but I think Ford should have paid for the whole repair since it was obviously a manufacturing defect. I've been told this is a widespread problem with this model."

Robert H. Milburn, Logansport, Ind.: "I'm extremely pleased with the add-on steps for my 1966 Deere 4020 tractor that I bought recently after reading about them in FARM SHOW. They're made by Pat Michels, Rt. 2, Box 323, Chippewa Falls, Wis. 54729. They fit the tractor well and make it a lot easier to climb on than it was originally. The steps themselves are deeper, making them easier and safer to use. They're built heavy to last."

H.E. Weisenborn, Dayton, Ohio: He nominates his Chevy Silverado 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a 350 cu. in. engine and four-speed automatic transmission as "best buy". "It's logged 136,000 tough miles and required only routine maintenance," he says. "I haven't had to add a quart of oil in thousands of miles. It still looks like it has only 36,000 miles on it. It's simply a great truck."

"My 'worst buy' is a Gravely 166 lawn tractor with 50-in. mower deck attachment. The foot clutch is always out of adjustment. Also, the turning radius is so big that you spend a great deal of mowing time making big wide circles."

Michael S. Dwyer, Wallingford, Ct.: One of Michael's "best buys" is his Stihl 025 chain saw that he bought new last spring. "It's an excellent saw for brush-cutting and is easy to handle."

On the negative side, Michael lists a Herd M96 grass seeder he purchased the same day as his Stihl chain saw. "I received the seeder in its shipping box and it had many dented and bent parts," he says. "The unit was painted after it was assembled and a lot of parts, including the slide, were stuck together. I notified the company and received a less-than-apologetic letter from the president, which greatly disappointed me."

Russell C. Drudge, Goshen, Ind.: "It's an extremely well-built machine," says Russell about his 1991 Howard HR-30 70-in Rotavator tiller. "I've used in it some very stony gardens without any damage," he says.

Scott Thompson, Harlan, Ind.: "This truck rides like a Cadillac. It's dependable and has plenty of room for the kids," Scott says about his 1989 Chevy 4-WD longbed pickup equipped with an extended cab and 350 cu. in. engine. "It gets 14 mpg chasing after parts. I think that's excellent for a 5,500-lb. truck."