

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

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

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William Dorminy, Alapaha, Ga.: "My worst buy and biggest lemon ever is my 1991 7710 Ford 2-WD tractor. The entire tractor has vibrated badly from day one and no one seems to be able to figure out what the problem is. At times the vibration is so bad your hands go numb because the steering wheel shakes so badly. The dealer I bought it from offered to exchange it for a new tractor but he went bankrupt before we were able to do that. I've taken it to two other Ford dealers and talked to the regional office in Atlanta, but no one will do anything. They suggested I put new tires on but since the tractor also vibrates when you rev it up at idle, I think the problem's in the engine or transmission. The tractor vibrates so badly now we're no longer able to use it."

"Another problem with the 7710 is that the hydraulics don't have enough power to pick up a 4-bottom plow and won't turn a hydraulic motor at a constant speed. Also, the air conditioner went out, the clutch had to be replaced, the radio antenna vibrated off, the radio broke, the radiator shook apart and we've had many other similar problems."

William says his "best buy" of all time is his 1969 4020 Deere tractor. "It's a good all-around machine with plenty of power

17,000 hours, but the engine still doesn't need an overhaul. I haven't done anything to it except change oil. I replaced the clutch and turbocharger and overhauled the hydraulic pump. I attribute the long life of this tractor to timely oil changes and daily start-ups."

Mary Ann Ratti, Hayward, Calif.: "Our best buy 1990 Ford 7.3-liter diesel pickup has 208,000 miles. We put on 200 miles a day going back and forth to our ranch. It gets 18 to 20 mpg. The clutch has never been touched. The first set of Michelin tires lasted 103,532 miles and the second set now has 105,000 miles."

Richard Warren, Miller, Mo.: "My 1992 Deere 9500 4-WD combine is a best buy. Last year was extremely wet which caused the combine to pull hard on our bottom gumbo soils, but the 235 hp engine had plenty of power to handle it. The cab is a joy to work in and the combine does a good job threshing and cleaning."

David J. Monteith, Birchrunville, Penn.: David nominates his 1993 Ford F-450 super-duty dump truck equipped with a 7.3-liter diesel engine and 5-speed manual transmission as his "best buy". "I own two other Ford diesel light trucks. I've used them hard but have had excellent luck with all of them. They don't cost much to maintain. None of them has needed any repair work under warranty."

Travis D. Stanley, Mountain City, Tenn.: "I like my 1991 Zetor 5245 4-WD tractor. It cost only \$16,000 compared to \$25,000 for other tractor brands with comparable power. It had a few problems at first. A bearing went out and there were fuel line problems with less than 150 hours. Now it has 373 hours and is going strong."

Wilbur E. Smith, Erie, Mich.: "We're well-satisfied with our Case-IH 25-ft. tandem disk. It replaced another Case-IH model that was 12 years old. It does an excellent job and disks level."

"My son and I bought our first Deere lawn mower about 15 years ago. It was a 12 hp 212 model. We liked it a lot so we bought a second one five years later. Five years after that we wanted another one, but the company no longer made that model so we bought a 260 model. I don't know if we'll get five years of service out of this one or not. It sure isn't an improvement over the old models. We've had problems with broken belts and with the transmission. We've never liked how it operates. I hope we can get a decent trade on a different mower next winter."

William Dawe, Lehman, Penn.: William's had good luck with his 1992 Deere 322 lawn and garden tractor. It's equipped with a 3-cylinder water-cooled gas engine, hydrostatic drive, and 38-in. deck. "We use it mainly to mow two cemeteries. The engine has plenty of power and the hydrostatic drive works well for mowing around obstacles and for cutting tall weeds and grass."

On the "worst buy" side, William's had problems with his 1985 International Cub Cadet riding mower equipped with a 2-cylinder air-cooled gas engine and 3-speed transmission. "I like the deck better than the one on Deere's riding mower, but the clutch cracked in three places and came flying out from underneath the tractor. This happened a total of eight times - three times in one summer. I was told that the problem has been solved on new models. It cost us a lot of downtime."

George W. Herbert, Jr., Brentwood, Tenn.: George is impressed with his Vicon

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and it's easy to handle. I'd buy two more today if they were available."

David Sadler, Fithian, Ill.: David's the satisfied owner of a Kawasaki 1000 Mule ATV. "Works great for all kinds of jobs around the farm. We use it to pick up junk along roadsides, clean up the yard, haul feed and hay, etc. We even use it to 'walk' beans. We mounted a spray tank and pump on it for hand spraying fence rows and around buildings. We also mounted a folding spray boom for spot spraying herbicides in the field."

"Our 1990 Massey-Ferguson 8570 rotary combine is a worst buy. It does a good job in corn, but we've had a lot of problems with it in soybeans that have wet stems. It'll cut and thresh the beans - even the green ones - but has trouble discharging crop residue to the chopper. The company has updated the combine every year, but they never have fixed the problem we have with residue plugging up."

Gusta Farms, Brown City, Mich.: "It should have more capacity and better bearings," reports Gusta, unhappy with his 1989 New Idea round baler. "We had to replace a bearing before we had even made 50 bales. I don't like having to get out of the tractor all the time to cut twine. I wish I had bought a Deere baler instead."

"My 1978 Deere small square baler is the best on the market. It ties the bale every time. Works great."

Paul E. Nelson, Jackson, Minn.: "I bought a used 1977 Deere 4430 tractor in 1980 with 800 hours. It now has almost