

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

We asked randomly selected farmers to "tell it like it is" in nominating their "best" and "worst" buys in the past 12 months.

by Harold M. Johnson
Editor

Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

"With the cost of equipment today, I'm surprised at the number of farmers who use only dollars and color to make major purchases. Some seem to be married to one color. Personally, I would compare specs and dealer service, and forget the color."

So says Bernard Kinkelaar, Dodge City, Kan. He is one of approximately 50 randomly selected readers who nominated their "best" and "worst" buys for this issue of FARM SHOW.

"My best buy is an 800 Versatile 4 WD tractor. Equipped with the Cummins engine, it's hard to beat. At 150 hours it developed a leak at the front main. My dealer had a factory mechanic at my shed at 10:00 the next morning. By 4:00 that afternoon I was going to the field. My cost, including mileage of 300 miles round trip, was zero. When Versatile and Cummins will stand behind their products like that, I'd recommend them to anyone. With a 60 Flex King Rod Weeder behind the 800, I run at 6.5 mph and cover 450 to 500 acres per day. When I can do that on approximately 100 gals. of fuel, I say you have a winning team. Another item I'm pleased with is the monitor on the Gleaner combine. I think it's money well spent."

Kinkelaar adds that "my '76 C-10 Chevy pickup was about the worst I

need high quality industrial type (grade) bearings. There is no reason a \$50,000 machine should go down because of a \$4.53 bearing. Low grade, imported, flanged bearings of the non-regreasable type are the worst. Some bearings cannot be replaced without replacing the entire sleeve or sprocket. At today's prices, one should expect better."

John blames "lack of engineering

"One of our pet peeves is low quality bearings."

and testing" for problems he's had with a 22½ ft. IHC model 45 field cultivator which he purchased last spring. "The problem lay in the fact that proper depth could not be maintained. If the tool was lifted part way, it would not always go down evenly unless one stopped, lifted it all the way up, then lowered it to a desired depth. The 3 cylinders just would not synchronize. The dealer did his best to rectify the problem, but unsuccessfully. The company has been working on the problem, I'm told. We hope they find a solution before spring work begins."

On the plus side, John cites a Chicago pneumatic wrench as being "just the trick for removing dual wheels, truck rims, cylinder bars, etc. Makes many jobs easier and quicker."

As in previous FARM SHOW buying surveys, the importance of dealing with a good dealer came through "loud and clear". For example:

Howard Johnson, Vermillion, S.D.: "My most satisfying buying experience is with a John Deere dealer. I was plowing last spring when all of a sudden I started blowing engine gaskets. I thought for sure I'd have to get the tractor hauled into a mechanic. Drove up to Pederson Machine, the Deere dealer in Beresford, and talked to the head mechanic. Told him the problem and he sent me to the parts man to get a lead plug for the engine block that cost about \$3.00. Went home and put it in the way the mechanic told me. Never had any more trouble. I really appreciated what he did. He saved me a lot of time and the expense of not having the tractor hauled in. He took time out to talk to me and didn't charge a thing for his advice. I didn't even know him. If I have more trouble, I know where I'll go for advice and repairs."

A.R. Christensen, Merced, Cal.: He's disappointed with the dealer who sold him a 25 x 150' Butler hay barn. "Even though the building was built on a slope, the runoff overflowed the gutter at the high end while little if any came down the down spout. The dealer would not do anything about it." The problem was corrected when an investigator from

ever had. It was equipped with the 350 engine and automatic transmission and I could only get 6 mpg. Traded it for a '77 GMC 15 Sierra Granada with the same equipment and now I can live with the 17-plus mpg."

In sending FARM SHOW his "best" and "worst" buy nominations, John Ries, of Ries Farms, Mt. Vernon, Ind., sent along a special "message to manufacturers": "In my opinion, most new products — especially machinery — are lower quality today. New model equipment is not field tested adequately. Too often, year-old tractors have been called back for major improvement. This is costly for owners, dealers and manufacturers. Our repair and maintenance costs are going up faster than purchase prices. One could once operate a tractor or combine two years without much repair. Now repairs are often needed the first year. Of course, most of them are covered by warranty, but this does not cover downtime, inconvenience and often labor. One of our pet peeves is low quality bearings. I cannot understand why manufacturers think farm equipment doesn't