

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Continued from previous page

Spreader tandem axle manure spreader which I bought to haul manure several miles.

**“I felt a bump, and looked back to see one of the wheels rolling down the field.”**

However, after about 39 loads I turned into the field from the road and felt a bump. I looked back to see one of the wheels rolling down the field. I found that all 10 bolts were still in the outer ring of the wheel hub, which had completely broken off. The wheel bolts were threaded into the hub as lugs. They were fine-threaded in the cast iron - something you don't do.

“The company said they would give me two hubs if I'd buy two more and pay for the freight. I asked the dealer if the company had changed the design, and he said they had.

“After waiting for more than a month, I was shocked to find the parts were shipped from western Canada and that my freight bill minus the parts was more than \$750. The company knew they had a problem because the new hubs were made from a visibly better cast iron, and studs were pressed into the hub so that now lug nuts were used to secure the wheels. I haven't had any more problems, but that doesn't make the past any better.”

**Kenneth Miller, Wolcottville, Ind.:** “I'm happy with my 1979 **Kubota B7100 4-WD** compact tractor equipped with a 3-cyl., 18 hp, diesel engine. The only repairs were to rebuild the starter and change some bearings and seals. The tractor came with a 5-ft. wide, spring-loaded blade on front. I built a 3-pt. carrier that I use to move boats every day, and it works great. During winter I use the tractor to push snow and to haul wood. I'll probably never part with it.”

**Martin E. Hansen, Muscatine, Iowa:** “My 2014 **Deere Gator XUV550** utility vehicle is my worst buy. The cable-based shift linkage and the centrifugal clutch are poorly designed. There are no brakes, and the centrifugal clutch lurches dangerously when starting and stopping. The gear shifter started to bind and lock up the first day. The problem got progressively worse, eventually completely locking up the transaxle and frequently leaving the vehicle stranded out in the field.

“The dealer told me to always put the vehicle in neutral, coast to a stop, and never park in gear or on an incline. The parking brake cable broke and kept stretching out of adjustment so that it wouldn't keep the vehicle from rolling, which was another safety hazard. The winch cable broke and had to be replaced the first time it was used with a snow blade. The axle seals started leaking during the first few months and had to be replaced. The engine keeps loading up, blowing black smoke, and backfiring on idle. The dealer told me to run the engine wide open every time I drove in order to clean it out, because the low idle speed was preset to work with the centrifugal clutch. Another problem is that the oil has to be changed about every 10 hrs. because it gets so dirty.

“I bought an extended warranty for the vehicle because of all the repeated problems. By the end of the 3-year warranty - with only 60 hrs. on the unit - the gearshift and transaxle were locking up tight almost every time they were used. I went to the online Deere Gator forum and learned about a retrofit clutch kit designed specifically to correct the locking shifter and clutch-transaxle problem, but the dealer said my existing clutch was within

spec and that a replacement wouldn't be covered under warranty.

“I called the company and they agreed to pay for a new clutch kit, which appears to have fixed the lock-up issues. But the engine backfiring and parking brake cable adjustment issues are still problems, and I'm afraid to park the vehicle anywhere without blocking the wheels.

“With only 65 hrs. on the machine, the dealer wants more than what I paid for it to trade for a similar new unit. He did all he could and was helpful, but we're very limited trying to work with such a poorly designed vehicle.”

**Rod Sobieski, Emporia, Kansas:** Ron's impressed with **Howard Feed-N-Wax Wood Polish and Conditioner**. A blend of beeswax and orange oil, it's designed to preserve wood finishes and to keep the finish from drying out and cracking ([www.howardproducts.com](http://www.howardproducts.com); ph 805 227-1000). “It made our hardwood floors look great and stay that way for weeks, compared to other products we've used that lasted for only a few days. It also renews faded, stained furniture amazingly well. It eliminates the need to refinish old furniture and can be easily applied with a rag, with no need to rub the product in or remove the excess. It even works on old leather shoes. Makes them look like they just got a fresh shining, with no buffing needed. A little of this product goes a long way.”

**Matthew Trail, Pipestem, W. Va.:** “I like my 2017 **New Holland Workmaster 70 4-WD** loader tractor equipped with a 7-ft. wide bucket and front-mounted bale spear. I'm amazed at how strong, reliable and easy to use this tractor is. I use it for bush hogging, hay making, loader work and other jobs. It was a great investment, and I plan on using it for the rest of my life.”

**Tom Harris, Edwardsburg, Mich.:** “It's the best mower I've used for a long time,” says Tom about his 2017 **Ferris zero-turn riding mower** equipped with a 31 hp. Briggs & Stratton engine and 61-in. deck ([www.ferrismowers.com](http://www.ferrismowers.com); ph 800 933-6175). “It comes with a 4-corner, coil-over-shock suspension system that makes it a dream to ride all day long.

“My **Echo 18-volt weed trimmer** will run for only about 25 min. before it has to be recharged, and recharging takes an hour.”

**Bill Clark, Caldwell, Ohio:** “My 1995 **Sears Craftsman GT garden tractor**, equipped with a 22 1/2 hp. Kohler engine and 50-in. deck, has been virtually flawless. I built a hitch out of a Mack clutch assembly so I could pull some Wheelhorse attachments that I already had. As a result, I can use the tractor to plow, mow and do grading work. I replaced the engine coils 3 years ago and the deck last year, and now my GT is ready for another 20 years.”

**W.E. McClusky, Big Sandy, Texas:** “In 2014 **FARM SHOW** reported on one of our worst buys - a 2012 **Dodge** pickup. A few months later the Dodge dealer in Mineola, Texas, called asking us to come in and make a trade. We bought a new Dodge and this one definitely isn't a lemon. Usually it can go more than 400 miles on a tank of gas.”

**Roger Kahler, Dunnell, Minn.:** “My wife is pleased with her **Makita 12-volt cordless vac**. Our daughter-in-law likes her new **Guardline** wireless driveway alarm ([www.guardlinesecurity.com](http://www.guardlinesecurity.com); ph 888 491-8064).”

**Clinton Whitney, Warsaw, Ind.:** “Over the years, the **Lincoln AC 225 amp arc welder** I bought new in 1976 has saved me a lot in repair costs and downtime.

“Very few problems with my 1985 **Honda Four Trax 250 4-wheeler** - just a shorted-out wire to the oil warning indicator and a new



**Jerry Maurer, Springfield, Ohio:** Jerry's impressed with his **Power Trac PT-422 4-WD**, articulated lawn tractor equipped with a 22 hp. gas engine ([www.power-trac.com](http://www.power-trac.com); ph 800 843-9273).

“I've owned Power Trac tractors for more than 13 years. They're multi-use, and the company offers several different models ranging from 18 to 65 hp. All of them are hydrostatic drive with no belts or chains, and they bend in the middle to steer so they don't tear up your yard.

“More than 40 different quick-tach attachments are available. I can remove my mower and install a bucket or forks in less than 1 min. to do other jobs. My tractor can lift 800 lbs. 4 ft. high without needing any counterweights on back.”

Power Tracs have been built since 1984 by a family-owned company in southwestern Virginia. They began selling equipment through representatives and dealers and then decided to sell through dealers alone. But in 1998, they decided to drop the dealer program and sell direct, which they say saves the buyer more than 30 percent.

Some of the available attachments include a dirt bucket, grapple bucket, utility grapple, and a 4-in-one bucket that works as a standard bucket, blade, grapple and false bottom bucket. There's a 3-blade

starter installed about 10 years ago.”

**Greg Kropf, Westphalia, Kansas:** “I like my 2016 **New Holland Workmaster 70 tractor** and 2017 **New Holland T4 100** cab tractor equipped with a front-end loader. The Workmaster has a lot of pep, is economical, and is a nice size for raking hay and making small square bales. The T4 is fuel efficient and recently averaged an impressive 1.3 gal. per hour doing chores. It uses just 2 gal. per hour whether pulling a Deere 15-ft. no-till drill or my Deere 630 disc mower conditioner. The cab is fairly quiet and has a nice air seat, and the air conditioner and heater work good. However, side access to the filters is awful, and the front lights on the cab aren't very intense and can't be aimed downward.

“My worst buy is a 2015 **Kioto PX9020 tractor** equipped with a cab and front-end loader. It was built by people who have never farmed in the U.S. It's extremely noisy with a lot of engine, gear, and hydraulic noise. It has low torque and power, and uses about 4 gal. per hour no matter how I use it. The fuel gauge screams empty after just 6 hrs., the forward/reverse gear shifter is balky, and the hydraulics don't lift at their rated capacity.

“After the tractor spent six weeks at the dealer during the height of hay season, I decided it was time to trade. My offer to Kioto to have them come out to my farm and evaluate the performance of their tractor on an American dairy farm is still open.

“We've tried several different float valves on our stock tanks but are still looking for a good valve that can handle solar-pumped pond water. **Hudson** water valves flow good but plug about every month, sticking in the flow position and overflowing the tanks. **Brown Weight** valves flow good, but plug

**Jerry Maurer likes his Power Trac PT-422 4-WD, articulated lawn tractor. It can be fitted with a front mount mini hoe that can dig 4 ft. deep.**



rotary mower, a brush cutter, a flail mower, knuckle boom mower, and a unique boom mower with a 5-ft. reach and 20-in. cut. It lets you mow roadsides and other areas that you can't reach with a conventional mower.

Also available is a hay fork, fertilizer spreader, cement mixer, forks, disc edger, power dumper, front mount mini hoe that can dig 4 ft. deep, trailer towing adapter, winch, tree shear, potato digger, post driver, concrete roller designed to unroll 5-ft. rolls of concrete reinforcement wire, and plugger core aerator. There's a post hole digger and planter drill head, dirt/snow blade, box blade, a couple of different trenchers, a ditch filler, sweeper, stump cutter, rototiller, “tree hugger”, power rake, snowblower, lift boom, pto and hydraulic-driven sump pump.

The company also offers single and double seat scooters, and a 6-wheel hydrostatic drive amphibious all-terrain vehicle.

up in less than 24 hrs. **ROJO (Jobe)** valves have never failed us, but their low water flow simply can't keep up with a herd of cattle. The most reliable valves we've found are made by **Dare-O-Matic** ([www.dareproducts.com](http://www.dareproducts.com); ph 800 922-3273). They don't flow as fast as Hudson valves, but they never stop or fail.”

**Stephen Kozzerowitz, De Soto, Wis.:** “I use my 2012 **Deere 1026R loader tractor** on 9 acres of lawn, fields and woods and like the ease of attaching and detaching the loader. The auto connect feature designed to attach a belly-mounted mower is nice but very finicky to hook up - it needs some changes. This tractor has adequate power and good safety features. However, parts for it are way too expensive.”

**Don Stewart, Mountain Grove, Mo.:** “My 2001 **Chevrolet 3500 Duramax** diesel pickup had problems with the headlights, instrument panel, and cab electronics. It got so bad that whenever I tried to operate the windshield wiper controls, the radio started turning on and off. Also, the tractor refused to start unless I turned the steering wheel to the right.

“No one could solve the problem. I used a repair manual wiring diagram to search for damaged wires. Chevrolet wires 12 volts from the battery direct to the fuse box and then distributes power from there. Ground wires, however, are re-routed to the frame or engine in many different places. The headlight relay, instrument cluster relay, and radio ground wire, as well as the fuel pump relay ground wire, crosses under the engine to attach near the starter. The wire loom containing only these two wires sagged down to rub on the steering tie rod, which wore through the wires and grounded out on the tie rod intermittently. Reconnecting the two