

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys



Gary Swensen, Yankton, S.D.: "One of the most valuable things my dad taught me was to buy stuff out of season if you can. So, this past winter, I bought a **Cyclone Rake** at an estate sale. It was only a few years old, and the largest model made. This spring, I mounted it on my Deere riding mower, and all I can say is 'Wow!'"

"Instead of spending days raking our huge yard for spring cleanup, I finished in 2 hrs., and it's never looked better. The suction power is fantastic. It came with the optional 15-ft. suction hose you can carry into corners. My wife especially likes it for cleaning out her flower beds up close to the house."



Clint Pinder, Stony Mountain, Manitoba: Clint is the satisfied owner of a 2020 **HeatMaster MF-5000e** wood furnace. "It burns just about anything with little smoke except when loading, which is normal with any wood furnace. The stainless-steel firebox and water jacket means it should last for the 20-year warranty."

Keith Hacker, Scandia, Minn.: "I purchased a **Jonsered Iron Horse** about 20 years ago. It's primarily used when working in my woods gathering firewood. It's a low-impact tracked unit that's very maneuverable and can go up and down slopes that are steeper than I can walk comfortably. I've also found it useful for hauling tools and fertilizer when working in my tract of black walnuts. I liked it so much I bought a second unit, so I have one configured with a cargo bed, the other with the 'log bunk' for hauling logs out of my wood lot."

Keith isn't pleased with his 2018 **Deere 5075** tractor he bought used in 2020 with 180 hours. "I should've researched the model better before I bought it. After purchasing, I read the user manual and discovered that the tractor hydraulics aren't to be used for powering orbital hydraulic motors. My main intended use for it was driving a woodchipper with hydraulic feed rollers. I had to outfit my new chipper with an auxiliary hydraulic pump. Then, I later discovered that the pto isn't able to drive the chipper with larger material. That's what I bought it for."

Howard Weed, Schuylerville, N.Y.: "I have a **Ryobi 40-volt** cordless chainsaw, string trimmer, and leaf blower. All perform equal to gas-powered."

Blane Cornell, Malta, Mont.: "My **Garmin eTrex 20x** GPS with a mapping

chip is a best buy. I use this GPS every day during the spraying season to map weed plots and for infestation mapping. The unit is indestructible, and the software is essential for my job."

Jim Hardy, Au Gres, Mich.: Jim nominates **Makita** battery tools as a best buy. "I've been using Makita tools since 1986, and they keep getting better. Every time I buy a new tool, it's better than the last. My last tool purchased was a jigsaw, and it's better than a plug-in. It's lightweight and has more power. I use it a lot for metal fab like a hack saw, and it cuts like butter. Great tools."

Kenny Liles, Wheatland, Okla.: "My best buy has been a 2014 **Deere 2025R** mid-size tractor that I bought new. I mainly use it to move compost around, but it handles anything I put at it. It has a lift bucket, which I've used to haul utility poles around the acreage. The backhoe was used to dig 300-ft. long trenches for a waterline and to plant trees. I've even used it to lift fully loaded trailers to hook them up. I also have a box blade, and I'll soon get a 48-in. pull-behind rototiller. Look out gardens, it's on its way..."

Dan Smith, Gunnison, Colo.: "The best buy we've ever made was a 2006 **Bobcat S175** that we purchased in 2007 with 36 hours on the meter. In 16 years of use, we've only replaced the block heater and the battery with no other repairs needed. The Kubota engine is extremely fuel efficient and starts well during our cold winters if it's plugged in for a few hours before starting. This is our second Bobcat. We had a similar experience with the first one, with over 10 years of trouble-free service."

Larry L. Gott, Shepherd, Mich.: Larry has mixed feelings about his **ComfortBilt HP21** wood pellet stove he purchased in November 2022. "It provides a lot of heat with a little fuel and is easy to fill and maintain. Initially, I had many difficulties that required three calls to the factory to get it set up to factory specs. I had to have a technician replace the igniter and a bearing in the auger. So, this is a great heater, but quality control may not be as good as it could be."



Philip Myers, Hollsopple, Penn.: "My **Metabo** cordless tapper/drill saves me a lot of time tapping as it comes with two different chucks to accept taps from 1/4 in. to 1/2 in. The bottoms of the chucks have square holes, so the taps can't slip in the chuck. In tapping mode, it turns to the right when you are at the depth you want. You just pull back and it automatically reverses (www.metabo.com/us/enus; ph 800-729-8752)."

Leonard Williams, Winfred, S.D.: A 2021 **Powermate** wood chipper rates as Leonard's worst buy. "On day one, the crankshaft broke, so I returned it to the store to be repaired. Three days later, flails came loose and exited the machine. I took it to a repair shop, and it took 368 days to fix. Less than 4 hrs. after bringing it home, the flail bolt broke again."

Rick Jeffries, Rogersville, Mo.: Rick's best buy is his skid steer quick-tach conversion adapter from **Titan Attachments** (www.palletforks.com; ph 800-605-7595). "It's



Janie's Mill sells many different varieties of grain products.

Grain Mill Best Buy

Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.: "Janie's Mill in eastern Illinois is a dangerous place for bakers to stop, given their diverse and ample supply of grains and flours (www.janiesmill.com; ph 815-953-1073). I previously wrote about the Wilkins family and the mill they established to process their many varieties of grain (Vol. 43, No. 2).

"As my wife Wendy and I were traveling through the area, we couldn't resist stopping by. Once there, we bought multiple varieties of wheat berries, several flours, rye berries, oat groats, and wheat and rye flakes. We could've bought more, but the car was getting full.

"Wendy does most of the baking at our house. Our go-to wheat in recent years has been Red Fife from a local grower, a Canadian landrace variety. It has great taste and is hard to beat.

"That said, the new and often old wheat varieties we picked up at Janie's Mill have their own great tastes. We've enjoyed bread

made from Warthog (pre-1600's European wheat) and the 1990's Glenn wheat berries home-milled into whole wheat flour, scones made with Black Emmer flour, and cookies made with home-milled rye berries. French-style baguettes made with the Warthog tasted even richer and more complex than our standby Red Fife.

"The chocolate chip cookies made with freshly milled rye flour were a real surprise. We may never have white flour cookies again. They were sweet and light, yet full of flavor as well as fiber.

"We're looking forward to exploring these and other grains and flours we purchased over the coming weeks and months. Luckily, it'll be easy to stock up when these are gone. The Janie's Mill website has a full list of grains and flour they offer. However, if passing through eastern Illinois, consider stopping by and picking up a few great grains and flours yourself."

Chia Supplement Best Buy

Elisa Wallace, Reddick, Fla.: "Spirulina Chia feed supplements from **StableFeed** have proven themselves as immune boosters on my horses. Florida can be very hostile to horses, and as a trainer and competitor (www.wallaceeventing.com) in nationally ranked events and competitions - including Olympic trials - my horses need to be in top condition.

"One of my mustangs, Hwin, had a summer sore, which is prevalent here in Florida. It involved a small wound that never closed, and we tried everything for about a year, including laser treatments at a rehab facility. She couldn't go outside if it was wet, and we had to constantly bandage her and apply creams.

"StableFeed gave me a sample of the Spirulina Chia supplement, and I began adding it to the feed. The wound soon started to close. In 4 to 6 weeks, the wound was gone.

"Another horse had a sarcoid or skin tumor. It had also lost hair from what is called sweat itch, a skin disease caused by an allergy.

"Since starting to feed this horse Spirulina Chia supplement, the sarcoid is nearly gone, and the hair is growing back. He now has a full tail and is looking good.



Wallace uses chia to supplement feed as an immune booster for her horses.

"I now use the Spirulina Chia feed supplement on all my horses as an immune booster. They're all healthier and more comfortable. I just add it to their daily feed.

"I've also used the Prickly Pear Chia supplement for glucose support. It's good for gut health. One of my horses was very fat. The Prickly Pear Chia helped it regulate its sugar, and it's no longer obese."

priced fairly and has excellent functionality. My old tractor is more useful now.

"My worst buy is a bark peeler attachment for a chainsaw that I bought on Amazon. I had to change the gear drive to match the pitch of my chain and never could get the barrel that holds the blades to realign properly. Waste of \$100."

Chuck Horrell, McGrady, N.C.: Chuck's impressed with his locking grease coupler from **LockNLube** (www.locknlube.com; ph 603-795-2298). "I do a lot of greasing on my various tractors and implements. I've

always preferred the lever-style grease guns instead of the pistol grip ones. I frequently find myself needing a third hand to hold the coupling onto the zerk fitting. But with the locking coupler from LockNLube, I can free up one hand. This has led to less mess and a lot less frustration which in turn leads to better and more frequent maintenance.

"I bought an old **Deere 5200 4-WD** tractor. When it's working, it's a great machine. But every time something tears up, the cost and hassle of getting parts from the Deere dealership drives me nuts."