

bolt for 3 mos., and it's still frozen. I'm very unhappy with the product."

Clinton Keeney, Creighton, Mo.: Clinton's the satisfied owner of a 2021 **Deere** 5045 4-WD with loader. "The hydraulics will pick up an elephant. I think I need to widen out the rear tires."

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David Van De Weert, Geneseo, N.Y.: "It's very simple to operate with a very simple monitor. I don't need six monitors in the cab to plant corn like some of the new planters have," says David, happy with his **Kinze** 3000 6-row planter.

Edward Johnson, Toccoa, Ga.: "I have a **Moosoo** cordless stick vacuum (model M8 Pro). It's an excellent little machine, lightweight, easy to use, and has good suction. I've highly recommended it in the past. However, after about a year of satisfactory service, the Li-Ion battery failed to hold a charge. Not a big deal, it happens. But nobody, including Moosoo, carries a replacement battery for this machine. We contacted Moosoo and they said they would let us know as soon as a battery becomes available. That was over 6 mos. ago. Now we have a \$200 paperweight. I can no longer recommend this vacuum as it's nothing without the battery."

Edward's not impressed with **Duracell** Copper Top batteries. "At one time, I thought they were the best batteries available. Now they're the worst. I've ruined several expensive devices using these batteries. Batteries that are supposed to be good until 2025 leak and damage electronic equipment. The batteries aren't dead, just cheaply made. This has happened on more than one device and damages the battery compartments so badly that the device becomes unusable. I contacted Duracell HQ, and they're only interested in where I bought the batteries, when I bought them, and what I paid for them. No help at all."

Scott Klitzke, Rock Springs, Wis.: "I have three pieces of **Massey Ferguson** hay equipment that are best buys. I have a WR9760 self-propelled disc mower conditioner purchased new several years ago, an 1840 small square baler purchased new 4 years ago, and an RB 4160V round baler purchased new 2 years ago. All three are very reliable.

"The WR9760 has been trouble-free, can cut a lot of acres quickly, cuts very clean, and is quiet and comfortable to operate. It's probably my favorite piece of equipment to operate.

"The 1840 small baler is trouble-free and simply never misses a tie. Because it's an in-line baler, it's easy to maneuver. It makes very solid square bales.

"My RB 4160V bales very solid round bales and has terrific capacity, even in corn stalks. The cutter does a nice job of cutting alfalfa hay. I had one minor issue with the hydraulic tension system, but my dealer was quick to respond to the problem and got it fixed so I could keep baling. I would highly recommend Massey Ferguson hay equipment.

"In 2016, I bought a new **JCB** skid steer. I bought it because of the side door, roomy cab, and terrific vision out of the cab. Just after the 2-year warranty was up, it started

showing a caution light, and the engine would decelerate. The dealer checked it with a laptop computer and couldn't find a problem and cleared the code.

"The JCB continued to decelerate, but if I kept it at full throttle, it was fine. Finally, at 6 years old and with 3,000 hrs. on it, I called the dealer to pick it up and fix it. After it was there a couple of weeks, I got a call, and they said it needed new electronic injectors along with other fuel system components. When I got it back, it worked perfectly, but the bill was over \$9,000.

"A few months later, with another 115 hrs. on it, the engine quit. The dealer hauled it in and found a new injector had failed. JCB covered the injector, but not the bill which was over \$4,000.

"I take very good care of this skid steer and do regular maintenance on it with regular oil and filter changes. The machine isn't abused. I told the dealer that this should never have happened, and I shouldn't have to face a bill like this. They had no time for me and told me that's just the way it is. Now move forward another 6 mos. and as I write this, my JCB is back in the shop with a failing hydraulic pump. I sent it to a different dealer this time, and they said the hydraulic filter has metal filings in it, and it appears the gear pump is eating itself up and to expect a bill of at least \$5,300 or more."

Loyal Showalter, Mendon, Mich.: "I purchased a 2019 **Predator** 212cc engine to run a 40-ft. 6-in. grain auger. It has plenty of power for the job, and always starts easily, usually one or two pulls on the rope. It seems to be a durable engine for the price.

Wilson Smith, Fallston, Md.: "In 2012, I bought a **Deere** 997 zero-turn diesel with a 60-in. deck. I mow our lawn and several paddocks and trails on our 64-acre horse farm. I haven't had one problem. It has lots of power."

Daniel Alderfer, Carbondale, Colo.: "I bought my 2006 **Toyota** Sienna V-6 used, and it's been a best buy. It now has over 240,000 miles with no engine work or oil leaks. It's very peppy and has a good transmission. The steering and front CV joints are still tight. I think this is unusual for an 8-passenger vehicle."

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Richard J. Noel, Highgate Center, Vt.: "My **Kubota** 1100C RTV has great cab heat in the winter and A/C in the summer. It pulls a load like a small tractor. It's not the fastest on the road, but I bought it to work, not play. "My **Stihl** 261C chainsaw runs and cuts like a big one. It starts on one pull after the initial cold start. I've had Stihls since 1976. My 031 still runs."

Andy Schubert, Tamaroa, Ill.: "My **Milwaukee** battery-operated saw is a good saw with one flaw – it needs a diaper as bar oil runs out of it after use and leaves a mess. Poor craftsmanship."

David Bergey, Meridian, Idaho: "I've had good luck with my 2021 **Holzform** 880 chainsaw from Farmertec. I use this 123cc saw for milling. It's greatly improved over earlier versions and half the cost of the comparable competition. Parts are available. It easily runs a 36-in. bar."

Donald Hatch, Center Point, Iowa: "One of my best buys was a new **Deere** 8440 tractor. We used it for 30 years before trading for another best buy, a **Deere** 8320.



Bucket with attached pvc tube makes soil sampling easy using a handheld drill with an auger bit.

Soil Sampler Best Buy

Jesse Puka-Beals, St. Paul, Minn.: "I've used a soil sample collection kit from **Collect-N-GO** for 2 to 3 years (www.collectnknow.com). It's a bucket with a pvc tube that extends through a hole in the bottom and an auger bit for a cordless drill.

"I do a lot of soil sampling for my work at the University of Minnesota. I use a standard probe for most of it. However, when I can't push it into the soil, I have to use a mallet to get to the right depth. I can end up bending the handle, and those probes can't be rewelded.

"There are some probes that are reinforced for hammering, but I've been using the bucket and auger device instead. I just set it down, drill down to depth, and the soil collects in the bucket. Then I go on to the next

of several spots and collect more samples. The pour spout on the bucket makes it easy to fill the sample bag.

"There are two possible downsides. One is you can't get a visual image of the soil profile like you can with a probe, as required for some government programs. The other is the sample can be biased if you don't drill deep enough.

"The first concern is certainly valid. As to the second, we compared the bucket and auger to a probe and felt the amounts of soil gathered seemed to be the same.

"The one definite drawback is you may need to bring lots of batteries for hard-packed soil if you are pulling lots of samples."

"**Ford** pickups have also been best buys. We have a 1999 7.3 with 320,000 miles that's still going strong. We also have a 2012 with a 6.7 that's been a great pickup."

Willard M. Stoll, Orrville, Ohio: "Our best buy is a **Woods** DS8.50 rotary mower that we bought new. We've had it for 4 years with no problems. The only problem I had was it was delivered with the blades on backward. I was able to change them myself."

Fred Elliott, Milan, Ind.: "My 2023 1/2-ton mini excavator from **Axismachineryllc.com** (www.axismachineryllc.com; ph 937-815-6018) has all the features of a full-size excavator. It has a full cab, articulating boom, and telescoping tracks. The machine itself rotates 360 degrees. The cab has a windshield wiper and the windows open. I purchased it with a ripper and a 16-in. bucket. I'm using it for clearing small trees and roots."

Marvin D. Sherlock, Sidney, Neb.: "My best buys are 2022 purchases from **Stihl**. Both our HAS 26 hedge trimmer/shears combo and GTA 26 garden trimmer/chainsaw combo have long battery run times to get a lot of work done on one charge. Both use the same battery, so you can use one while charging the other battery to expand work time. Both are very easy to use and easily maintained."

Pat Lindau, South New Berlin, N.Y.: "After my husband got sick, I needed something small but strong enough to plow our 1/3-mile driveway. The **Kubota** X1100 with plow did the trick. I'm able to plow snow and haul wood without a problem."

Ed Roy, Concord, N.C.: "My 2020 **BigDog** 42-in. zero-turn mower runs and mows very well. I've had no problems and have done only regular maintenance, including belts

and blades (www.bigdogmowerco.com; ph 844-594-2448).

"My 20-volt **DeWalt** 1/2-in. impact wrench still works well after years of hard use."



Charles Sasscer, Cottondale, Fla.: "We love our 2022 **DR** Pro XL trimmer mower with Beaver Blade attachment and quick-change trimmer head. The trimmer cuts through tall grass and weeds with ease. The Beaver Blade cuts small trees up to 3 in. (even larger if using some finesse) like slicing butter. The trimmer cord outlasts anything we've used before. Highly recommend. The only downside is the battery didn't last."

Sigurd J. Grindheim, Ojibwa, Wis.: Sigurd nominates his 2022 **New Holland** Boomer 40 with grapple and bucket as a best buy. "I picked up all the branches and logs that broke from ice and snow using this tractor and grapple. I never had to get off the tractor. It works great and is easy to fill with fuel while standing on the ground. It's handy and easy to get on and off."