

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

David hasn't had such a positive experience with his **Deere** 955 tractor and LA115 lawnmower. "The 955s rear PTO seal leaks, and it's not a bolt-on part. The whole bead end has to come off—not fun. Both the 955 and LA115's paint comes off in pieces the size of a slice of bread. Deere got cheap and didn't use any primer. Paint flakes off to bare steel, meaning rust."



**David Peck, Perry, N.Y.:** A Craftsman SpeedDrive ratcheting screwdriver is David's best buy. "I've had five or six drivers of different brands over the years. The one I just bought was an impulse buy. It's the heaviest one I've had. It's great for quickly putting in or removing screws."

**Ed Hawley, Freeport, Ill.:** "FARM SHOW is my favorite best buy. I share it with my neighbor."

"My two 72-in. **Scag** lawnmowers are also best buys. We have lots of lawn, and these mowers have worked perfectly."

"My 2021 **Toyota** Prius is the second I've owned. It has 58,000 miles and gets 20 mpg. I couldn't be more pleased."

**Bradley Potter, Lowell, Mich.:** "I have a few products that have performed really well for me."

"My **Gravely** 260Z zero-turn mower has 1,624 hrs. on it. The only repair was an idler pulley on the deck. It still has all the original belts."

"I read about the **Tera Pump** fuel transfer pump in the 'Best, Worst Buys' section of FARM SHOW ([www.terapump.net](http://www.terapump.net); ph 877-251-2288). I decided to give it a try. It's pumped well over 75 gals. of gas, and I've only replaced the batteries as needed. No problems."

"My **Echo** leaf blower (model PB-2520) has more capacity to blow leaves than any other blower I've ever owned."

"My worst purchase was a dowel maker jig that I found online. It was made in China. All it does is make a mess on a piece of wood that's useless as a dowel."



**Bruce Empey, Firth, Idaho:** "I like my **AmeriAg** Livestock Mineral Feeders ([www.ameriag.com](http://www.ameriag.com); ph 877-551-4916). The minerals stay dry even in rain or snowstorms. The cattle can't dump them over and spill the minerals. I've had them for over 10 years and have never had a problem. Baby calves can also use them. They're made in the U.S. I recommend them to anyone who feeds loose minerals. People also use them to put regular salt blocks in."

**Gerald Kooyers, Holland, Mich.:** "My best buy is a 1966 **Dodge** Power Wagon I bought used in 1970. After three engine

rebUILds and one body and drivetrain rebuild, it's still going as strong as a 1969 model."

**J. Tom Mislivec, Warren, Mich.:** "Liberty denim bib overalls have well-designed pockets that are deep and have a place for everything ([www.libertybibs.com](http://www.libertybibs.com); ph 888-433-4254). The zippers are made of sturdy metal, and the fly is easy to access. Overall, they're well-made."

"I just sold a 2009 **Chevy** Silverado 2500 6L V8 with 360,000 miles. Since it was new, the truck needed only normal maintenance. It used very little oil between oil changes at 6,000 to 7,000 miles. Several other Chevy 1500 trucks needed transmissions at 120,000 miles."

**Allen Andrews, Gillett, Pa.:** "My battery-powered **Hart** string trimmer has held up really well. It works great, better than any other brands I've owned. The convenience of not having to be plugged into electric power makes trimming so much easier."

**Lester Hoover, Dorchester, Wis.:** "I've used my **Milwaukee** USB-rechargeable hard hat headlamp five days a week for six years, working on feeding and manure handling equipment in dairy barns. It never gave me any grief and took a lot of abuse. I used it until the charging port wore out. I bought an identical one to replace it."

**Paul D. Bessette, Stafford Springs, Conn.:** "I'm still pleased with my **Keen** waterproof utility shoes. They're comfortable, rugged and long-lasting."

"My **Kioti** CK20S with loader and backhoe remains a best buy after many years."

"However, I'm not pleased with my **Ariens**-branded, Husqvarna-made 48-in. lawn tractor. It has a broken frame. The problem is that neither company takes responsibility. Repair kits are only available from aftermarket sources. Too many pre-drilled holes in the frame are weak points, especially when your lawn isn't nice and flat."

**Lee Telfer, Kimberly, Wis.:** "We purchased an **International** 444 new. Four or five years later, the hydraulic hose at the top right of the transmission exploded while my grandfather was chopping prunings from apple trees with a Bush Hog. We hired an engineer to find out why the hose blew. He found no vent anywhere on the hydraulic system. My grandfather spent several days in the hospital with first, second and third degree burns from hot oil reaching the exhaust and igniting before he jumped from the tractor."

**Darrel Clark, Racine, Minn.:** "My 2024 **Greenworks** battery-operated 20-in. commercial chainsaw is ready to go if the battery is charged. It lasts about 20 min. with a fully charged battery."

**Jim Tillotson, Towanda, Kan.:** "In 1996, I purchased a **Deere** 60-in. lawn mower. I finally had to replace the engine in 2024. It runs like a new machine again."

"FARM SHOW is an excellent magazine. I'm pleased with my **RIDGID** drill driver and 1/2-in. impact. The batteries are excellent, plus there's a lifetime warranty."

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**Martin Miller, Paicines, Calif.:** Martin is pleased with both his 2020 and 2024 **Honda** Ridgeline trucks. "I've owned four Dodge Ram pickups and was happy with three of the



Miller says livestock panels are one of the best tools available for small farmers.

## Livestock Panel Best Buy

**Sandra Kay Miller, Mt. Holly Springs, Pa.:**

"Livestock panels are a best buy for me. I use them for everything. They're one of the best tools there are for a small farmer. All you need is a bolt cutter to cut a panel down to the size you need."

"I used to do classes on how to use them to make hoop coops and quarantine pens, all sorts of things for poultry."

"I've used them to make greenhouses and trellises. They're great for supporting tomatoes, pole beans, peas and gourds. Just pound in two T-posts and attach a panel."

"They make great portable gates. With my 16-ft. wide lanes, it's easy to grab a panel and use it in the lane to catch an animal. Just connect one end to a gate post, and you have an instant holding/catch pen or even a squeeze chute. I keep four 3-ft. lengths of 5/16-in. chain with interlocking spring snaps handy for such purposes."

"I also use them to reinforce larger gates so

lambs and goats can't get through. I spot-weld them in place or just zip-tie them to make a gate escape-proof."

"They're great for making lambing tubs as well. Just use four 16-ft., 34-in. hog panels to make a square, with one to bisect it. Cut a panel in half and use it to make four 4 by 4-ft. pens."

"The 34-in. hog panels with their smaller holes work well for my goats, too. However, I do have to keep a bolt cutter handy as they tend to get their horns caught."

"When I didn't have a bale spike, I used cattle panels with big, round bales. I would roll a bale on and drag it where I needed it, roll it off and wrap the panel around it as a bale feeder."

"Livestock handling equipment doesn't have to be expensive. With livestock panels, you can put them where they're needed, then use them for something else entirely."

four. When the last one was involved in an accident, we found a 2020 Ridgeline Black Edition, which we loved. Unfortunately, 100 miles from home, we had an accident with that one. So I looked for another Ridgeline and bought a 2024 to get us home. We love it, too."

**Kenneth Bartee, Center, Colo.:** "I like my **Milwaukee** tools, especially my M18 impact wrench, which I use when repairing pivot sprinklers."

"My 2022 **Jeep** Cherokee has too many computer gadgets. It makes driving feel unsafe."

**James A. Benshoff, Summerhill, Pa.:** "My best buy is our family's **Oliver** Model 35 combine with a 10 ft. cut, which was purchased new in 1955. Everything that moved had a grease fitting."

"My father did custom cutting to help pay for the combine. We never replaced a bearing in this combine. It took two men or one man and a boy (me) about an hour to grease the machine. It never went to work until it was serviced. I don't know how many acres of oats and wheat it cut over its lifespan. I took over the farm in 1970 and ran the combine until the 1989 season was over."

"I replaced the Oliver with a **Deere** 3300 with a 10 ft. cut purchased from an estate sale with 1,987 hrs. on the clock. This is the worst-engineered piece of equipment I've ever owned. Who puts the exhaust pipe 2 in. from the top radiator hose? No wonder it gets soft and fails. Or, why put the air intake right above and behind the header, where it can suck up all the chaff and clog? Also, the

machine has very few grease fittings. Most of the non-greaseable bearings have failed and been replaced."



**Scott Peterson, Duluth, Minn.:** "The **Darwin's Grip** that was in FARM SHOW (Vol. 48, No. 5) is one of the best attachments for my yard equipment ([www.darwingsgrip.com](http://www.darwingsgrip.com); ph 256-701-7605). It helps a lot to relieve stress on your back and allows you to trim and edge while standing straight up. The unit is fully adjustable for the operator."

**Brenda Apple, Charlotte, Tenn.:** "I've used my **DeWalt** 20-volt MAX cordless pruner (DCPR320B) for two years. It works great on limbs up to 1 in. or larger, especially when it's soft wood. This has become one of my absolute favorite tools. I always have it on my ATV in case I run into something that needs to be pruned back."

**Dave Adams, Kellerton, Iowa:** Dave is the satisfied owner of a **Milwaukee** cordless air compressor and vacuum sweeper. "Both tools use batteries I already own. The compact air compressor keeps the tires inflated on our equipment, even when we're

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