

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

**Jon Hiatt, Jasonville, Ind.:** “My Titan tree shear wasn’t at all as advertised and didn’t work as promised. It was supposed to have a 5-in. cylinder and cut trees and limbs up to 12 in. It did neither. When I contacted Titan about the issue, they asked for videos, which the dealer and I sent. They did nothing to help resolve the issue or return the product. I hope they’ve improved their product and customer service since my experience with them in 2024, but buyer beware.”

**Neal Van Egmond, Oskaloosa, Iowa:** “My best buy is my 1996 Ford F-250. I’ve put 383,000 miles on it, most of them in our small town. I’ve never touched the motor or transmission.”

**Herbert Dunham, Millerton, Pa.:** “My best buy is my 1976 Scout Traveler. However, it might also be my worst buy, since it’s hauled home almost a dozen more Scouts, including a ’79 Safari restored in Hawaii that I bought in Watertown, N.Y.”

**Wendel Payn, Seville, Ohio:** “One of my best buys has been my 1973 Deere 2030 gas tractor, which I bought used 20 years ago. It also has a Westendorf loader, another best buy. It’s a very handy outfit that gets a lot of use on my small farm.”

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**James Coleman, Lewisburg, Ky.:** “My two DR Field & Brush mowers have exceeded my expectations. In early 1990, I saw an ad in Mother Earth News for the first-generation DR. I was looking for a way to make extra money, and it had more potential than I’d thought.

“The first mower was a high-wheeler with an 8-hp Briggs & Stratton engine. The first thing I noticed about this machine was its simplicity. This mower can do things and go places you can’t reach with a tractor. I think the price was around \$800.

“I put ads on bulletin boards around my area and started getting calls. It paid for itself in the first year and put extra money in my pocket.

“In 1996, I bought my farm, which was overgrown with briars and grass up to my head. A friend and I tag-teamed to clear the whole 6-acre field. My friend had bought a small house on 3 acres, and he used the mower to clear his property. He now owns the mower.

“In 2005, I purchased a new 13-hp DR all-terrain mower. I was wondering how to pay for it, since the price was double what I paid for the first one. I again advertised ‘Field & Brush Mowing.’

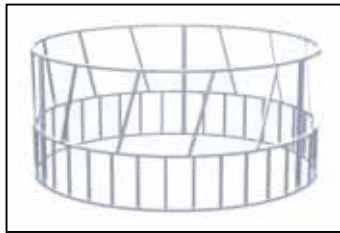
“Again, the mower paid for itself in about a year. It has a few more features than the other mower, but the first one did a very good job. I can’t say enough about either. Very good machines. I still have the 2005.”

**Roman Bontrager, Delphos, Ohio:** “In Vol. 49, No. 3, I gave a best-buy review of my experience with MTO Battery (www.mtobattery.com; ph 717-751-2705). Because it was an obsolete battery, I decided to send my 56-volt Worx battery to MTO for rebuilding. I got it back and was happy with the power it provided to my leaf blower.

“Eleven months later, the battery started losing power and wouldn’t hold a charge. Eleven and a half months into its 12-mo. warranty, I contacted customer service. They

told me to return it and said they would check it out. Ten days later, I received my battery back, rebuilt and strong, at no charge.

“I just want to give MTO a thumbs-up for its outstanding customer service.”



**Larry Tripp, Blackwell, Okla.:** “Aluminum round bale feeders from Five Star Manufacturing in Crane, Mo., are a best buy (www.fivestarmfg.com; ph 800-733-5720). They’re made from rectangular aluminum tubing laid flat and are extremely light, tough and durable. If the hay is decent, the cows will slide them around to clean up almost all of the waste.

“My worst buy is my 2023 Ford Explorer. The dealer had to replace the struts at about 200 miles, when it was new. It now has about 30,000 miles and is on its third set of struts. Last time, they replaced only one side, so I guess it’s getting better. Counting the originals, that’s 4 1/2 sets.”



**George, Douds, Iowa:** “My Chapman Mfg. Master screwdriver set (#5575), purchased in December 2024, is an awesome, made-in-the-U.S. set (www.chapmanmfg.com; ph 475-232-0802). It has all the bits I’ll need and is built to last. It can handle more torque than most. The set includes a 90-degree angle ratchet and a screwdriver-type driver. The ratchet is amazing and has helped me remove some ‘impossible’ fasteners. I use it regularly, especially for hard-to-turn fasteners. I take it back and forth between the shop and the house. Maybe I need another set?”

“I haven’t had a good experience with the Milwaukee 18V Fuel 6 1/2-in. circular saw. After about a year, the first one stopped as if the auto-brake was fully engaged. The second one did the same. I never even wore out the blade. For warranty service, I needed to go to a repair center about 2 hr. away. I never seemed to have a day to do this, and arranging shipping was difficult. I finally tried one that isn’t a Fuel. It’s 18V and doesn’t have an auto-brake. It doesn’t have enough power for me, but it works.”

**Fred Ingle, Charleston, Ill.:** “My best buy is a Pionair air treatment system that uses UV-C light and photocatalysis to eliminate mold, allergens and odors (www.pionair.net; ph 678-890-8100). It keeps our household healthy year-round and even kills viruses. All you need to do is replace the lamp module once a year.”



“The Jaw Boss held the branch firmly while I took my chainsaw to it without worrying about dulling the chain on dirt and debris,” says Ruen.

## Hitch-Mount Log Holder Best Buy

**Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.:** “When I write about new products for FARM SHOW, I often wonder whether they’re as good as the company claims. After writing about the Jaw Boss (www.tieboss.com; ph 937-570-4529) in Vol. 50, No. 2, I decided to try it myself and ordered one.

“When it arrived, I was impressed by how well thought out the design was and by the quality of the steel. All the parts are sized to fit inside the 2 by 2-in. receiver hitch tube.

“Assembly was a snap. Simply install four bolts and slip it into a receiver hitch. I put it on my trusty 2004 Honda ATV and went to work cutting up firewood.

“The four steel bars with their sawtooth-like edges dig right in. I loaded them down

with a 5-ft. length of 9-in. oak without a problem. The Jaw Boss held the branch firmly while I took my chainsaw to it, without worrying about dulling the chain on dirt and debris.

“It holds dimension lumber equally well. At \$140, it was definitely a best buy. It likely will pay for itself through reduced chain sharpening and replacement alone.

“I have only one concern about the company, and that’s customer service. I left messages on the company’s voicemail and sent emails, but I didn’t receive a response. Given the design and apparent quality, I don’t expect any problems. However, I do appreciate companies that call back or otherwise respond.”

**M. Stephens, Racine, Wis.:** “My 2019 GMC Yukon is my best buy. I bought it used in 2020 with 38,000 miles on it, and now it has nearly 150,000 miles and has required only regular maintenance and a water pump replacement. It gets good gas mileage for its size and is a very comfortable ride for a bigger guy like me.

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“Bar Keepers Friend is also a best buy. I’ve tried the foaming spray, powder and gel. The one that works the best every time is the gel. It’s like a miracle cleaner.”

**Robin G. Wismer, Edinboro, Pa.:** “I bought a Shindaiwa trimmer about 24 years ago on the recommendation of a guy I spoke with at Home Depot (www.shindaiwa-usa.com). He was a former small-engine repair shop owner. I was about 30 and wanted to buy a trimmer/weeder that would last me until I died. That purchase led me to buy two Shindaiwa chainsaws, which have proven just as reliable. All three products always fire up, run great and do their jobs.

“The worst products I’ve ever purchased were from Tractor Supply (two 2,000-lb. winches, a come-along and a farm jack). All of them let me down and failed the first time I tried to use them.”

**Lynn Redmer II, Wichita, Kan.:** “My Deere 4210 utility tractor with a 420 loader

is like my right-hand man. It’s extremely handy. I added forks to the loader, and I use it for everything around my property. I’ve had very few issues with it.”



**Art Struthers, Moline, Ill.:** Art is pleased with Tractor Supply’s Royal Wing bird seed. “I’ve tried several Royal Wing blends from TSC. They all seem to attract more birds to our small backyard feeder. We enjoy watching the birds visit the feeder from our kitchen window. The price is good. My only complaint is that we get so many birds that I really need to buy a bigger feeder.”

**William R. Shipman, Elwood, Ind.:** “I ordered 12 Wix filters from Filter1.com. I never received the filters, but my credit card was charged. I contacted them several times by phone and left messages, but I never received a return call. I also emailed them several times, but I never got a reply. I wouldn’t recommend them.”

**David Miller, Pickett, Wis.:** “My Ellis 1600 metal-cutting saw is built heavy-duty. It cuts straight or at angles up to 45 degrees. If you do a lot of metal fabrication, you should have one in your shop.”