

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

**Steve:** “About 5 years ago, I bought a **Kubota** disc mower (DMC8536). It’s been a great mower. I haven’t replaced any knives. The cutter bar rides over stones that my previous mower would’ve hit, which led to broken knives.”



**Barry Hohol, Amberg, Wis.:** Barry’s had good luck with **Greased Lightning** Classic cleaner and degreaser ([www.greased-lightning.com](http://www.greased-lightning.com); ph 800-646-7730). “It removes grease, grime, soap scum, mildew stains, mud, and even oil and grease from clothes. It doesn’t leave a gritty feeling on hands.”

**Dave Shaub, Rolla, Mo.:** “Three years ago, we bought a new **Retco** tilt trailer to haul our Bobcat T300 ([www.retcotrailer.com](http://www.retcotrailer.com)). It’s very handy for loading equipment, and we like it very much.”

**Ken Shields, Cedaredge, Co.:** “My most recent best buy is an **Echo** CS-590 chainsaw. I’ve favored this brand ever since I bought my first one in 1978, which was marketed by John Deere under its name.

“Like its predecessors, this one is powerful, tough (I backed over one with my pickup and was still able to use it), and long-lasting. All of them have performed perfectly from idle to full throttle. I use my saws commercially and also own a CS-800 that eats 36-in. pine trees for lunch and has taken down a couple of 48-in. cottonwood trees.

“My grandson, who has taken up commercial tree work, now cruises with an Echo after struggling with other brands at first.”

**Bruce Porkka, Atlantic Mine, Mich.:** “I’ve been very impressed with



**SealLube**, a product from a Michigan company ([www.newtechoilcompany.com](http://www.newtechoilcompany.com); ph 800-434-9192). When added to oil in a leaking system, it permanently expands all rubber seals to slow or stop the leak. It’s the only product that really works.”

**Sterling Churgin, Riverhead, N.Y.:** “My worst purchase was a set of his-and-hers **International Watch Company** Portofino 18K gold watches. They cost over \$20,000 but never kept time. The second hand fell off one of them. Now they sit in the junk drawer with all the other junk.”

**George H. Clark Jr., Seneca, S.C.:** “In 2024, a particularly catastrophic storm hit our area of South Carolina. At the time, I was using an old cinder-block house as a shop. Because the storm damaged it to the point that it was unsafe, I had to tear it down. There were hardly any excavators available to rent, so I bought a new **Kubota** KX080-4 Series 2 excavator.

“So far, it’s been an excellent machine for my small farm. It runs great and has the power I need. After a little learning, I demolished the old, dangerous shop house in half a day. I’m very satisfied. My late brother repurposed some of the old planking to make an ammo box. It’s a good thing to be able to have this equipment, thanks to God.”

**John Heide, Boulder, Mont.:** “My **Toro** 21-in. deluxe power drive push mower has been the best buy. After 30 years, it still starts on the first pull every time.

“My worst buy is a **Stihl** MS 180 chainsaw. It won’t start.”

**Ron Holmes, Flat Rock, Ill.:** “I was skeptical when I purchased a **DeWalt** 20V pole saw (DCPS620B) and a chainsaw (DCCS621B), but both have proved quite handy for small jobs around the farm. I’d buy them again.”

**Tom MacNab, Blue, Ariz.:** “My best buy is a **Stihl** Multi-Task Tool. It wasn’t cheap, and I looked at it for 2 years before finally buying it. I’m glad I did. I got the KM 56 RC-E, which is lighter and has enough power for anything I want. One power head runs a weed eater, brush cutter, roto tiller, leaf blower and a pole saw. Other attachments are available. I take care of multiple properties. It always starts on the first pull. I also like my **Stihl** 362 MS chainsaw.

“Another best buy for me has been my **DR PRO** XL30 mower.”

**Donald Muther, Mulberry, Fla.:** “I usually research the tools I buy ahead of time, so I can’t really say I’ve had too many disappointments. Aside from the tools I made for myself that do what I need, I have three standout tools that I can’t imagine not having anymore.

“I saw the **Multiplaz** 3500 reviewed in **FARM SHOW** (Vol. 38, No. 2 and Vol. 36, No. 3; [www.multiplaz.com](http://www.multiplaz.com)), and it seemed like an amazing tool. I picked up a new one from Multiplaz and started using it. It had a bit of a learning curve, but once I got used to it, it became my go-to tool.

“It’s saved me countless dollars in gas because it does 95% of what my oxy-acetylene torches do. It heats, gas welds and brazes like oxy can’t. It can weld dissimilar metals better than any multi-metal rod. I love that it doesn’t splatter all over or emit noxious fumes. It’s great for in-shop welding, especially around my machine tools. It’s taken the place of 99% of my arc welding chores. It’s a pretty darn good plasma cutter as well. I have other welders, but they collect a lot of dust now.

“My next best buy is my collection of **Milwaukee** M12 tools, especially the 3/8-in. impact and drill. I actually wore out my first drill from heavy use and had to replace it. The M12 impact punches way above its weight class. I also have the rotary cutoff tool, soldering tool, die grinder and rotary tool, all of which get regular workouts. I have other M12 tools as well. They’re all great. If the going gets tough, I also have the older V28 tools, but they don’t come out that often with the M12 stuff around.

“Lastly, there’s my dad’s old **Craftsman** commercial 12-in. lathe. I remember building it with him on his basement floor around 1970. When he passed, I got it. I made a few mods to bring it into the modern world, and it really cranks out a lot of work for me. When space got tight and I needed to get a lathe out of the shop, my bigger Monarch got the boot. The old Craftsman has a smaller footprint, sets up faster, and has tons of available tooling that’s both affordable and practical. It’ll easily hit the tolerances I need for repair and restoration work.”

**John Powell, West Point, Iowa:** John is the satisfied owner of a **BendPak** 4-post



Ruen on his 2004 Honda Foreman Rubicon.

## ‘Old Yellow’ ATV Gets An Upgrade

**Jim Ruen, La Crescent, Minn.:** “One of my best buys ever has been my 2004 **Honda** Foreman Rubicon. Readers of **FARM SHOW** may recall the stories I’ve written about Old Yellow and the various attachments I’ve added and used over the years.

“I originally bought it for use as a mini-tractor after writing a 2002 article about Concord Equipment’s two-way hydraulic loader system for ATVs. In 2006, I described my purchase of the loader system and how I used it.

“A 2007 **FARM SHOW** story about Delbert Luna’s ATV push trailer and a story I wrote about Ashland Industries’ push-type scraper for skid loaders gave me a dangerous idea. I asked a local fabricator to build a 4 by 8-ft push trailer that matched my loader arms. I reported on it that fall. The caster wheels I had mounted couldn’t handle the job. I considered adding larger wheels, but I noticed the loader arms were showing strain. It was repurposed as a tow-behind.

“In 2008, I described prepping an 8-acre cornfield for planting hardwood trees. I hooked the Rubicon to a 57-in. rough-cut mower to chop up the stubble and the field’s edge weeds and brush. Then I switched to a 43-in. chisel plow. The implements had been provided by Matt Kunz of Kunz Engineering for field testing.

“Matt drove up from his Illinois headquarters with the mower, two chisel plows and his own ATV. We double-ganged the ATVs with chisel plows in the corn stubble.

“I was so impressed with the Kunz mower that I ended up buying one and have used it ever since. It’s built tough, with a frame that won’t say no. I’ve never feared following Matt’s advice when mowing down 2 to 3 in. saplings: ‘If you don’t get it the first time, back up and hit it harder.’

car lift ([www.bendpak.com](http://www.bendpak.com); ph 800-253-2363). “I’m keeping my older vehicles in operation to avoid buying new vehicles that are overpriced and unreliable. I also restore antique cars as a hobby. With the car lift, I can work on them much more easily for maintenance and restoration.”

**Randy Braddock, Syracuse, Kan.:** “My **Bobcat** V519 Telehandler has been my best purchase lately. It uses any skid steer attachment and has been a lifesaver in many situations around the farm.”

**Kent Spader, York, Neb.:** Kent’s pleased with his 2025 **GMC** Acadia. “It’s been good so far. There’s a lot of technology in this vehicle. I hate to think what it would cost if all this stuff went haywire, but after 16,000 miles, it’s held up well. It has hands-free steering, which is very nice. My wife is scared to use it, but I like it. It gets remarkably good gas mileage for a big car.

“In 2020, I described upgrading my loader system. The company had changed its name to Wild Hare. At the time, readers might have noted that the Old Yellow Rubicon handled the larger, more powerful loader system just fine.

“Just 2 years ago, I did a ‘Best Buy’ on a set of forks for the Wild Hare system. They’re multipurpose, and I find I use them more than either the bucket or the blade. Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever. Wild Hare closed their doors this past December. They were a good company to work with and always responsive. I guess I waited too long to purchase some of their other attachments, like the box blade and rear 3-pt.

“A few weeks ago, my Rubicon closed down as well. The driveshaft was shot. I have a crackerjack ATV mechanic in the area, and he delivered the bad news.

“The 2004 driveshaft was a one-year item and is no longer available from Honda. An aftermarket replacement would cost \$1,100, plus the labor to rip apart the engine and transmission. ‘If you do it, you might as well rebuild the engine, given its age,’ suggested Matt Jeff of Hedgehog ATV. ‘You’re looking at \$3,000 to \$4,000, and you still have a 22-year-old ATV with other things that could fail.’

“His advice was to buy a new one, and I followed it. I knew what I wanted. My 2026 Honda Foreman Rubicon has a few changes from the 2004 model. What hasn’t changed is the rock-solid Honda engine and a transmission that has changed names several times but is mechanically about the same as it was in my Old Yellow. I just have to get used to the Hero Red color.

“With any luck at all, **FARM SHOW** readers will be seeing articles featuring the new Rubicon for at least another 22 years.”

It even continues to get mileage at higher speeds without penalizing you much for driving fast, which it seems like everybody does these days.”

**Jon E. Otts, Canastota, N.Y.:** “Years ago, I bought a **Delta** table saw from a Delta dealer. When I began using it, I found it didn’t cut square. I checked underneath and found there was no way to correct it. You’d think quality control would catch something like that. Hindsight — when buying a table saw, take a small square with you.

“On the best side, I bought a grinder from **Harbor Freight** for \$19.95, and it works great. Luck of the draw, I guess.”

**Nathan Nevells, Whitley City, Ky.:** “I just purchased a **Worx** chainsaw with a 10-in. blade for \$155. It’s amazing and well built.

“I’m 90 years old and still cut wood, grow a garden, till, and mow for the neighbor with

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