

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

done cutting down the trees I go cut the stumps left by all the other models.

"The company's Model 40, which I use on my farm, has a 16-in. dia. cutting blade. I mount it on my Versatile bi-directional tractor so I don't have to look back.

"The blade on this saw makes a 3-in. thick cut through the tree so it won't pinch the blade. A steel arm hydraulically pushes the tree away from the operator as it's cut down. I've cut trees from 4 to 48 inches in diameter. When cutting smaller trees, I just keep on driving slowly forward without ever coming to a full stop. One day I used it to cut down 1,500 trees in just 3 1/2 hours. I've also used it to cut down trees up to 48 inches in diameter. I do that by making several 'pre-cuts' on one side of the tree to make room for the gearbox.

"Model 40 sells for about \$6,500. The company's model 48 has a 20-in. dia. blade and sells for \$7,500."

Richard Woods, King Ferry, N.Y.: "My Bixby 110 corn burning stove is my worst buy. The automatic ash dump jams about once a week and has to be manually cleaned after it shuts down. The dealer has come out many times and tried everything he can think of, but nothing has helped. We're constantly adjusting the feed rate and exhaust fan, but it still jams. Also, it seems that every year this stove starts making a new noise."

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Gary Swabb, Arcanum, Ohio: "My Edenpure quartz infrared portable heater is my worst buy. After five months of use, five of the unit's six heating elements burned out. I called the company but got no help."

Chris Kornkven, Helenville, Wis.: Chris likes the Meg-Mo replacement blades he bought for his lawn mower (ph 877 625-0125; www.meg-mo.com). The system consists of a central steel disc with four "fold-back" cutting blades attached. With conventional single blades, when the blade wears out you have to replace the whole blade. With the Meg-Mo design, you keep the disc and replace only the knives.

"I first saw an article on these blades a few years ago in FARM SHOW. It caught my eye because I was tired of having to buy two sets of stock blades a year for my mower. The metal used in stock blades is cheap and low quality, and the blades bend easily and wear out too fast. I've used the Meg-Mo blades I originally ordered for the past 2 1/2 seasons. Now two of the knives are getting a little worn so I ordered more knives at only \$4.95 each. So-called premium replacement stock blades for riding mowers cost \$30 or more.

"Meg-Mo blades are well built and made from high quality steel so they stand up to a lot of punishment, and they do a great job of cutting in tall or wet grass. Anyone who spends much time on a lawn mower should look at these blades and save themselves some money and trouble."

Herbert Aurand, Syracuse, N.Y.: A 2007 Husqvarna lawn tractor rates as Herbert's "worst buy". "The tractor was delivered low on engine oil and the belts hadn't been set up properly. I was able to mow my lawn only six times before the deck linkage came off and drove the deck into the ground, bending a blade and shaft. I had to replace the linkage, blade and shaft. The dealer refused to admit that the problem started with a faulty

linkage - which hadn't been installed properly and came off after the third mowing. Neither the dealer nor the company has returned my phone calls, email or letters."

Jerry Freeman, Brookings, S. Dak.: "I used Slime (www.slime.com) to stop an air leak in a tire on my riding mower. It worked great.

"My Chevrolet Tracker mini SUV is a worthless piece of scrap metal. I used to always buy Chevy products, but no more."

Elmer Pinkerton, Elmwood, Neb.: "I have two expensive Carhart coats and they're good in every way but one. The big, roomy pockets have only one layer of fabric over the outside of the pockets so it's impossible to warm your hands in them.

"My Echo backpack leaf vacuum shreds 12 bushels of leaves down to one bushel. I use it to gather leaves that have blown into fences and flower beds, which I can't get by any other means. I have the company's professional unit. When it clogs up it's a real problem to unclog it. The suction tube attachment on it is a joke. The bag has to be attached with a Velcro strap, and getting the bag over the tube isn't easy. The tube the bag attaches to is very difficult to attach and to rotate."

Robert Comer, Eaton Rapids, Mich.: "My 1987 Deere 318 riding mower, which I bought used in 1998, is my best buy. It has required only routine maintenance."

John Stockman, Charlton, Mass.: "My best buy is an old Iron Mule 4000 log handling tractor. My friends thought I was crazy to buy a used logging machine that I'd never



seen from a guy I didn't know who lived about 1,000 miles away. But I had a gut feeling the guy I talked to on the phone was an honest man.

"That old machine arrived on the date agreed and worked much better than I expected. It needed a few minor things like grease fittings, gauges and new bushings, but it has been running great for six months. We use it almost every day to bring clean logs to our bandsaw mill. I'd like to remind folks there are still honest people out there who do right by you, and you should thank them for doing that."

Roger DeHaan, Orange City, Iowa: "I'm well pleased with our St. Croix corn burning stove. We've used it for three winters with no problems. We burn 14 1/2 percent moisture corn that comes right from the combine. No cleaning is necessary if you set the combine for the cleanest grain possible.

"We shut the stove down once a day to drop the clinkers from the firepot into the ash pan. We re-light the stove with a cup of pellets and a squirt of starter gel. This procedure takes maybe two minutes. We have the heat control set as low as possible unless the outdoor temperature drops below 20 degrees.

"Corn is a very safe fuel as it won't explode, has no smell, and is efficient to heat with. I think that corn at \$5 per bushel is cheaper than heating with gas or other fuels. We love the even heat that comes out of this stove. Also, I like that we're using fuel from our own farm."

Craig Robison, Tremont, Ill.: "I never used my 2008 Troy Bilt 525 4-cycle line trimmer. When I got it home I added the enclosed 3 oz. of oil to the crankcase and let it sit on

Chainsaw Carver Likes His Stihl Saws

Minnesotan Scott Hendershot has been making chainsaw carvings and building log cabins for decades. He's used all kinds of chainsaws over the years but for the last several years he's stuck with Stihl. He says they vibrate less, have a less irritating sound, and last longer than other makes. "I own several in various sizes up to a 440 with a 36-in. bar to carve big sculptures. But for shaping and details, I rely on the MS 180C with a 14-in. bar and standard chain. I like the quick chain adjuster they added in recent years. For carving letters and finer detail, I have an older MS 170 set up with a carving bar that has a dime-size tip.

"I use these saws hard - sometimes running all day long - especially when building log cabins where we have to cut scribed lines on logs to make a tight fit. Because of our heavy use, usually the first thing to go is the oiler. But by the time the oiler stops working, however, my saws have done what would generally be a lifetime of work for most chainsaw owners. It often makes more sense to buy a new saw for about \$200 than to pay for repairs. One drawback

the work bench. The following day about one third of the oil had drained out, and two days later the crankcase was empty. I wondered what else might go wrong with it so I returned it to the store where I bought it."

Steve Shaner, King George, Va.: Steve's disappointed with his Roomba robot vacuum. "We had hoped this robot vacuum would save us some time cleaning, but it didn't. It wasn't reliable, nor was it durable. I don't think it was made for the real world. Cleaning it afterward takes almost as long as just using a regular vacuum on the same area. It does a fair job in a limited area, but in a larger area with furniture and a mix of carpet and wood floors it gets stuck or lost almost every time. Sorry, we don't want to rearrange our house to accommodate a vacuum cleaner."

Robert Jones, Advance, Mo.: "My worst buy is the 2007 Tecumseh engine in my riding mower. It was very noisy and sounded like it had a bad bearing. The first dealer I called didn't want anything to do with it. The second dealer said they no longer serviced these engines. The third dealer said I'd have to pay for any repairs and submit the bill for warranty. I contacted the company that I bought it from and they said I could return it at my expense. I wrote to Tecumseh, but they never replied. Then I wrote to the Attorney General's office and they referred it to the Bureau of Consumer Protection in Wisconsin. They notified Tecumseh, which notified me as well as the other people involved and said they would take care of the problem. So far they haven't."

Carlton Dubberly, Waycross, Ga.: "My 1981 Bobcat T20 riding mower is my best buy. I've used it to mow between Christmas trees and to mow lawns year after year with no problems."

On the negative side, he lists his 2007 Easy Set mole trap. "It wouldn't trip from the time I got it. I talked to the company three times and was first told to oil it with silicon, but that didn't work. Then I was told to put spacers under the trip lever, but that didn't work either. I tried using it in different kinds of soil with no luck. The company told me they would ship a replacement unit. However, I never received it so I sent mine back to them. I never heard from them so I had to eat the \$40."

Carl Hodge, Nunnally, Tenn.: "My 1973 Ford F-350 pickup is my best buy. The



Chainsaw carver Scott Hendershot says Stihl chainsaws are his favorite brand.

to using a consumer-type saw for a business is that the warranty period is reduced."

pickup came equipped with a 390 cu. in. engine and a heavy duty transmission, cooling system, and towing package. The engine has been overhauled once and the heads twice; and the starter has been replaced once; the water pump twice; and the alternator twice. It has been painted twice, the second time because of a sloppy paint job the first time.

"Some of the many features I like about this truck is that it doesn't have a lot of unnecessary electrical equipment. I have to unlock the doors with a key, lower the windows with a crank, turn the lights on/off with a pull-out/push-in switch, and manually adjust the seats.

"I paid \$5,050 for the pickup and have spent less than \$5,000 keeping it going."

Steven George, Marietta, N.Y.: Steven nominates his 2003 Aqua Therm outdoor boiler/stove as his "best buy". "We bought this stove while building our geodesic dome home, which we heat with radiant heat in a concrete floor. I think this stove is the best out there with its welded stainless steel boiler, rugged construction, heavy steel door, and oval chamber. It's easy to clean out the ashes because of a unique auger under the firebox - a few turns every other day is all it takes. The ashes are fine dust - 12 face cords of wood yields less than 50 gallons of ash. My only complaint is the legs could be a bit higher so I wouldn't have to bend over to load wood. We set our stove up on foundation blocks which raised it 10 inches."

Paul Oranchuk, Calgary, Alberta: "My 1990 Mazda B2200 pickup has about 175,000 miles on it and is my best buy. The transmission was overhauled once, and it has gone through one battery and one set of tires.

"I like everything about my 2003 Pontiac Montana including its fuel efficiency, handling, and looks. What I don't like is it takes a long time to warm up when it's cold outside."

Francis Remsik, Spokane, Wash.: "Last year I bought a new Husqvarna Rancher 460 chain saw equipped with a 20-in. bar. I bought it after trying a Poulan Pro saw, which I couldn't get started. The Husqvarna started on the first pull and hasn't missed a lick since.

"I recently bought a new Epson C-120 printer which works great. I bought it after returning two Hewlett Packard printers. They both fed multiple sheets of paper for one page of text printed."

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