

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Earl H. Martin, Flora, Ontario: "My 1986 Deutz-Allis 4-WD loader tractor has a lot of power, is fuel efficient, clean, quiet and dependable. It has about 4,700 hours on it. I've replaced the clutch, water pump bearing, and radiator. It's a simple, straight-forward tractor, and whenever I hook onto implements I have the trust and confidence that it won't let me down."

George Wiemers, Greenview, Ill.: "My worst buys are two pairs of Deere boots. On the first pair, one of the boots tore even though I don't remember stressing it in any way. The same thing happened to the second pair. I started having doubts, but I was still convinced that these were good boots. The Deere advertisement talked about these boots as 'equipment'. So I bought a third pair and they tore, too. I finally bought a different, cheaper brand that has lasted longer than all three pairs of Deere boots. I think the company should place a small, round lemon decal on these boots."

Frank J. Stehno, Stratton, Neb.: "My FAST field sprayer equipped with an 80-ft. boom and cone bottom tank is a good machine (Fast Distributing, Inc., Rt. 2, Box 325, Mountain Lake, Minn. 56159 ph 800 772-9279). Owner Verlyn Fast built it to my specifications and it has worked great."

Morris Thompson, Chapel Hill, N.C.: "I like my 1970 Deere 3020 tractors. Over the past 15 years I've bought three Deere 3020's. Two were equipped with power shift transmissions and the other with a Synchro-Range transmission. These tractors work great in hay fields because they have good brakes, excellent steering, and roomy, flat operator decks. I've put a lot of hours on all of them but they just keep on running, with little maintenance required. I wish the company made new tractors as good as these."

Don Helm, Fairview, Mont.: Don nominates his Honda Harmony lawn mower as his "worst buy". "The mower deck is complete junk. The belts lasted only one year, the idler pulleys lasted only two years, and now the gauge wheels are 'egged out' after only three years of use. The bolts that hold the blades on are either almost impossible to remove, or they loosen and fall off by themselves. The mower deck clutch goes from disengaged to fully engaged with a quick snap, even with the engine at a slow idle. The hydrostatic transmission works well but loses oil, and there's no sign of an external leak. When I first bought the machine it was hard to start, but I cured that problem by re-assembling the choke properly. I think I'll switch back to Deere lawn mowers."

Tom Schmid, Oberon, N. Dak.: "I'm disappointed in companies that push their block men to cover more territory. It took a Gehl man ten months to check out a problem that I had with a baler. The dealer and company finally took care of the problem, but after that long it was hard to remember exactly how everything worked. It seems like some of these people are forgetting who really provides their pay."

Gerald E. Johnson, Hector, Minn.: Gerald likes his Schweiss 2560 zero turn riding mower (Schweiss, Inc., Co. Rd. 13, Box 557, Sherburn, Minn. 56171 ph 507 764-2251). "It does a good job mowing whether the grass is wet or dry. It's easy to drive and steers with one control. I can turn in a tight 360 degree circle and use either hand to drive. My wife also loves it."

Daniel Stokes, Omro, Wis.: "I'm well

pleased with my 1999 Deere Gator, except that the engine has a tendency to leak gas into the oil in cold weather. The company installed a different jet in the carburetor and changed the spark plugs, but I don't think they've solved the problem. Does anyone else have this problem? I think it's going to be a short-lived engine. It has only 80 hours on it now."

Quentin Raddatz, Belle Plaine, Minn.: Quentin's happy with his 1963 Deere 3010 and 1967 Deere 4020 tractors, both of which have gas engines. I bought both of them used about 25 years ago and they've worked great all these years. The 4020 has about 8,000 hours on it while the 3010 has about 6,000 hours. I certainly recommend Deere products."

On the minus side, he lists his 1998 Cover-All 30 by 60-ft. hoop building. "In June of 1999 I noticed some holes and deterioration at the southwest corner of the roof. I called the company at least six times and was promised that the problems would be taken care of immediately. However, no one ever called back. I certainly don't recommend this building to anyone."

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Don Williams, Clarinda, Iowa: "One of my best buys was a Partner chain saw that I bought in 1981. It has always cut exceptionally well. Even after it sits for a few months it starts right up."

"One of my 'not-so-good' experiences was with Walt's Wholesale Clothing of Darlington, S.C. I ordered six pairs of trousers. When the trousers were delivered they were all the wrong size. I was told to return them. When the replacements arrived there were four pairs of the correct size but two pairs that were still the wrong size. After 2 1/2 months the company hasn't reimbursed me for the postage, as they promised. I get a different excuse each time I contact them. I hope they appreciated my last order, because it will be my last."

Kenneth M. Mersch, Eagle Grove, Iowa: "My Deere 980 field cultivator has plenty of trash clearance and leaves the ground smooth and level."

"My worst buy was my Deere 960 field cultivator. It was equipped with single wheels on the wings which prevented dirt from flowing and caused ridges."

Gene Wiemers, Melbourne, Iowa: Gene nominates his 1997 Cray Finger Air Reel as his "best buy" (Cray Co., West Fargo, N. Dak.). "It works as advertised. In 1997 our beans got dry very fast so shattering was a problem with conventional sicklebars. The air reel, however, almost eliminated shatter. It paid for itself that fall alone."

"My 1999 Case-DMI deep ripper is a best buy. The fall of 1999 was very dry in our area, but this ripper penetrated the ground and did an excellent job of shattering it."

Doug Witman, Marietta, Pa.: "My 1999 Deere 935 MoCo conditioner works well and has been trouble-free. It's easy to adjust and is a well-designed machine."

"My wife insists that our all-time best buy was a Red Devil 8-ft. snowblower which we

purchased during a big blizzard in 1996. It really saved us. However, we haven't had any big snowstorms since then."

Marvin Otto, Walcott, Iowa: "My Long Air Saver nozzle is my best buy (Long Mfg. Co., Inc., Box 26469, Indianapolis, Ind. 46226 ph 888 898-5666). I've been employed in a manufacturing plant for 38 years where the entire facility used Air Saver air nozzles. I purchased a few used ones at a plant sale. They're the most useful tools I own. I use them to blow out plugged tubing, pipes, engine passageways, etc. I'd recommend this handy piece of equipment to anyone. The company also makes a Water Saver nozzle that's a favorite of farmers. I don't have one but plan to order one soon."

"My worst buys are Stanley pre-hung exterior doors which I had installed in my new house and painted in 1996. A year ago the lower jambs showed signs of rotting, and this spring rotting is evident. I called the company and they say there's only a one-year warranty on the jambs. It seems that I made an expensive mistake. I'll never buy this door again."

William Fischer, Fremont, Wis.: A Solar Barn 34 by 80-ft. greenhouse-type calf barn rates as William's "best buy". "Calves really do well in the light and airy environment inside. We put it up more than three years ago and really like it. It's priced much lower than a conventional calf building and provides a much better and healthier environment for the animals. Also, it's a pleasure to work inside it."

Edwin Jost, Bryant, Iowa: Edwin's impressed with his 2000 Honda 300 4-wheeler ATV. "I had a 1991 model for eight years with no problems. It still has the same battery and performs well."

"I like my 15-year-old Morton machine shed. No leaks or problems."

Richard Pecha, Jr., Bloomer, Wis.: "My best buy is my Deere 7775 skidsteer loader. I use it with a tine bucket equipped with a grapple fork, a 7-ft. material bucket, a round bale spear, and a pallet fork. I don't think there's anything that I can't do with this loader. I also use it with a 6-ft. snowblower which works great. The only problem is that in the past few years it hasn't snowed much around here. I have an enclosed cab and heater and fan on the loader so whether it's summer or winter, I stay warm and dust-free."

Daniel Heike, Mondovi, Wis.: "My 1999 New Holland 900 forage harvester, equipped with a processor, is my best buy. It has a lot of capacity and is virtually trouble-free. The processor works great for corn silage, and my cattle really like the feed. I haven't seen a left over corn cob in our bunks yet this year."

Francis Burch, Lester Prairie, Minn.: "I'm well pleased with my Deere 980 24 1/2-ft. field cultivator equipped with a 5-bar harrow. I use it to incorporate herbicides after they've been custom applied. I pull it with my Deere 7810 tractor at a speed of 5 1/2 to 6 mph. It mixes the soil well and is easy to adjust. My herbicides worked great last year."

John Lykkehoy, Cope, Colo.: "My 1988 Versatile 876 4-WD tractor has required few repairs and is my best buy. The batteries on this tractor are unbelievable - they've never been replaced."

John E. Frick, Morrison, Okla.: "I'm happy with my Reese belt-driven drum mow-

ers. They cut good and there's no gearbox to cause problems."

Dan Schmitt, Omaha, Neb.: "Our best buy is our 1940 Farmall M tractor which we've owned for more than 20 years. We added a wide front end, 3-pt. hitch, power steering, live hydraulics, and a 12-volt battery. We've also adapted a pickup snowplow to it that can be hydraulically tilted from side to side. This old tractor gets used almost every day and has been trouble-free. We also use a 3-pt. forklift and scoop with it."

"Our Yard Man 21-in. self-propelled lawn mower equipped with a 6 1/2 hp OHV gas engine starts easy and is a best buy. My wife says it's a pleasure to use."

Vernon Weber, Herington, Kan.: "I like my 1998 New Holland 14-ft. Hydro Swing swather. It developed a minor break which the dealer promptly took care of."

Don Haberer, Russell, Kan.: "My Sunflower 1321 16-ft. offset disk does a good job of leveling the ground and I can even plow with it if I want. I think Sunflower is the Cadillac of tillage tools, particularly disks."

Thomas B. Ewing, Spring Hill, Kan.: "One of my best buys is a custom-built flatbed equipped with bale forks. It's built by Browns Welding of Blue Mound, Kan."

"I'm also satisfied with my Case-IH MX 120 tractor. I had a few minor problems with it, but they were all taken care of promptly by the dealer."

"My 1998 Lester 44 by 120-ft. building is a best buy."

Merle Moerbe, La Pryor, Texas: "My 1998 A & L grain cart is my best buy. It has a good-sized corner auger which unloads grain fast. It can keep up with my Deere 9600 combine equipped with a 12-row, 30-in. header working in 8,500-lb. per acre milo."

Michael A. Zacherl, Tionesta, Pa.: A 1999 Ford F-150 extended cab 4-WD pickup rates as Michael's "best buy". "I really like the 4-door cab. It has good seats and offers the driver a good view. I also like the 4-WD electronic control. It sure beats the old lock-out hubs."

"I have mixed feelings about my 1999 Simplicity Legacy 20 hp garden tractor. It

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works great for mowing or blowing snow. However, the hydraulic system works too slow and brackets on the rocker shaft keep working loose from the frame. The tractor's foot-controlled hydraulics are a joke when used with the mower. Also, you can't use the differential lock and activate the hydraulics at the same time. I installed a hand-controlled lever to operate the hydraulics, which helps a lot."

John H. Melin, Hutchinson, Minn.: "I like my 1998 Agco Allis 514H riding mower equipped with a 38-in. deck. It has excellent maneuverability with the steering and the foot-operated hydrostatic transmission. My wife usually mows our lawn but she has health problems. This mower makes the job much easier."

Russell L. Borland, Richwood, Ohio:

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