

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

most of the welds it makes have the appearance of chicken droppings. I've also used the company's 220-volt models with no problems so I suspect that the appearance has to do with the 110-volt power."

John Preikschat, White City, Sask.: "My 1994 1-ton engine hoist from **Northern Hydraulics** has a simple design and is reliable. It's easy to partially disassemble for transport when I loan it to friends."

On the "worst buy" side, he doesn't like **Westward** knife guards designed to replace the original guards on New Holland sickle mowers. "The castings are rough and have a slightly different design than the New Holland guards in the mounting area. This results in reduced cutting ability, especially in heavy or damp conditions."

Marion Frank, Loudonville, Ohio: Marion likes his model 360 A.C. pony pump made by **Proven Pumps Corp., Inc.** (1440 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90012). "It's a nice little pump. By hooking a garden hose up to it I can move water to my sheep. As long as the impeller is wet it'll self prime to 7 ft. I bought it from Northern Hydraulics (Box 1499, Burnsville, Minn. 55337 ph 612 894-8310).

Larry Kielstra, Abbotsford, B.C.: "Our best buy is our 1995 **Claas** 860 forage harvester. It's fuel efficient and can harvest a lot of feed in one day. It's also easy to work on and is built with the customer in mind."

Neil Noble, Shelburne, Ontario: "I bought my 1988 **Lincoln** Town car used five years ago and it's the best car I've ever owned. It has 134,000 miles on it but still doesn't use any oil. It gets 28 mpg and has a comfortable ride. I drive in a lot of bad weather but I always feel safe with this car. It has a frame under it like the frame on a pickup."

Abe Hanson, Worsley, Alberta: "It continues to work well for me year after year with only regular maintenance. No major problems," says Abe about his 1985 **Husqvarna** 266 chain saw.

His "worst buy" is his 1997 **Deere** 5200 tractor. "The collar shift transmission is almost impossible to engage without grinding the gears. I also had problems with the clutch, and the starter had to be rebuilt, all at less than 120 hours. The noise level is so high that I can't operate it comfortably without using ear plugs."

Maurice Kostichok, Insinger, Sask.: "Our 1992 **REM** 1026 grain vac has a lot of

his best to fix it, but the problem is in the design. I've used New Holland hay equipment for several years and have been satisfied with it. However, this baler has shaken my faith in New Holland equipment."

Jim Briggs, Marsing, Idaho: Jim likes his **International** 86 series tractors. "They're good tractors and you don't need a computer degree in order to work on them. Maintain them properly and they'll last forever."

"I've had problems with the electronic clutches on my **International** 5088 tractor. Otherwise it's a good tractor, too."

Les McEwan, Altamont, Manitoba: Les is unhappy with his 1995 **Chevrolet** Corsica car equipped with a 2.2-liter 4-cyl. engine. "It has been a nightmare from the day we bought it. The car began blowing head gaskets during the first year, but we were reassured that many of these cars had been shipped with defective head gaskets and that the problem had been corrected."

"However, two months after the warranty expired the engine developed a serious coolant leak. The car was returned to the dealer who told me that it needed yet another new head gasket. By this time the warranty had expired and they were going to charge \$900 to do the work. I thought that was too much for a 4-cyl. gas engine so I took the car to a machine shop. They discovered that the head was warped and that the original valve train had been incorrectly assembled. To add insult to injury, when I appealed the case to GM, I was told that the problem was my fault because I hadn't flushed the coolant at 30,000 miles, even though we had never been able to keep the same anti-freeze in the engine for more than seven months."

"The re-machined head managed to stay on the car for more than a year, but then it cracked apart and had to be replaced due to defects in the casting. Because this has been a long-standing problem with this car and was documented back to the warranty period, we again appealed to GM but to no avail. They've generously offered to list me as a dissatisfied customer on their computer file. To date this car has had three heater cores, two radiators, an alternator, and two heads, with no signs of improvement."

"We have three cars, four pickups, two grain trucks, five tractors and many other pieces of farm equipment on our farm, but this car has been the single most expensive piece of equipment to maintain that we've ever had."

Arthur T. Jackson, Anahuac, Texas: "I'm well pleased with my 1998 **Dodge** 2500 heavy duty 3/4-ton pickup equipped with a Cummins 24-valve diesel engine. It has a lot of power and a heavy duty frame. No problems."

Jerry Richter, Newell, Iowa: "I like my 1997 **Chevrolet** heavy-duty 1/2-ton pickup, especially the newly-designed power steering. It rides and drives excellent."

"My 1999 **Sudenga** 10-in. dia., 71-ft. long grain auger is well made and has a flexible hopper that's easy to use."

"I like my **Deere** 9600 combine. I use a 30-ft. platform on it to harvest soybeans. My only complaint is that the machine is underpowered when harvesting beams with tough stems."

Dave Gilbert, Onoway, Alberta: Dave has a small hobby farm and says he has purchased a lot of older equipment over the past 25 years that still works well. "One best buy was a **Deere** 336 baler which I bought used

14 years ago. It continues to make consistently good bales with no problems. I've used it to make about 30,000 bales and have had to replace only two shear pins."

"My **International** Farmall 460 diesel tractor is easy on fuel and equipped with a torque amplifier which makes it an ideal baling tractor. It doesn't have power steering but is still easy to steer. The only problem is that it's hard to start. I have to use glow plugs."

"I use my **Massey Harris** 444 gas tractor as a loader and chore tractor. I added power steering so the tractor is easy to steer even with the loader on it. It's one of the best starting tractors I've ever had and just keeps on running with minimal repairs. The only problem I had was finding a replacement high

"It's one of the best starting tractors I've ever had."

pressure seal for the Webster electric/hydraulic pump. They seem to be impossible to find. This would be a perfectly good hydraulic pump if it weren't for problems with a \$10 seal."

"I purchased my **McCormick Deering** WD6 tractor about 20 years ago for \$450. Although I use this tractor only to operate a side delivery rake now, it still runs well and has never needed any major repairs. I wonder if the tractors being made today will be running 40 years from now, or will they be in the junk yard?"

Thomas Spurling, Ft. Lipton, Colo.: Thomas likes his 1992 **Deere** 2355 utility tractor. "It has more power and is more fuel efficient than the **Deere** 730 it replaced. One complaint, however, is that using the clutch and backing up at the same time is difficult because the seat doesn't swivel. Also, the 3-pt. lever is mounted too low, making it hard to reach conveniently when backing up."

James E. Yoder, Bonanza, Ore.: "It has performed with flying colors," says James, pleased with his **Hesston** 1160 hydraulic swing swather/conditioner. "I had a field that was plowed the previous fall but filled up with volunteer grain anyway the following spring. I let the grain grow to chop for hay. I was concerned that the swather wouldn't track to either side of the row as it's supposed to, but it worked perfectly. What's more, the swather's never plugged in heavy grass or alfalfa, either."

George E. Lutgen, Jr., Lowell, Ind.: George has had good luck with his 1997 **Stihl** 066 chain saw equipped with an interchangeable 25 and 36-in. bar. "It's easy to start, is lightweight and has plenty of power. It's easy to change bars and chains, and the slack adjuster on the side to tighten the chain is easy to use."

On the negative side, a 3/8-in. **Snap-On** ratchet built in a 1/4-in. flex head body is one of his "worst buys". "The ratcheting head breaks every time you use it. My dealer doesn't stock the replacement head so it's been broken more often than not."

William L. Kentner, Bossevain, Man.: William's made two "best buys" in the last couple of years.

"My 1997 **Grasshopper** 725 mower equipped with 52-in. deck and Kohler engine starts well and has plenty of power. I like the ease of handling and self-dumping bagger. They both come in handy in my lawn mow-

ing business. My only complaint is that there are no dealers in southwestern Manitoba for parts or service work."

"Another 'best buy' is my 1997 **Ford** F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a Powerstroke diesel engine. It's got good ground clearance and tons of power. For example, it'll pull a 24-ft. trailer loaded with two antique tractors with ease. It also provides great visibility. My wife would like to see a light on the gearshift and a 'booster' handle on the passenger side."

On the negative side, William lists his 1996 **Snapper** self-propelled 21-in. mower powered by a Briggs & Stratton engine. "I used it a month before I discovered the air filter hadn't been installed at the factory. The dealer told me the engine was ready to go and took five months to get the new motor. I traded it later in the season for a **Deere** that has worked fine."

Wilson Burkholder, Dayton, Va.: "The **White** American 80 we bought used with 752 hours on it is a best buy. It's equipped with a 3.9-liter Cummins engine, 6-speed transmission and 3-speed powershift, which give it plenty of power and torque. It also has a fantastic hydraulic system that makes it a pleasure to operate. It now has 2,500 trouble-free hours on it."

"We installed an aftercooler boosting horsepower to 115 so it'll pull our forage harvester and power drainage tillage."

"Our worst buy was a 440 **Mustang** skid steer loader. It was very hard to get started, even in the summer. Various other problems included catching fire. We finally traded it off on a Case 1835B which proved to be a good machine."

Neal McCleary, Elkton, Md.: Neal and his wife nominate their **Jessee Machine** quick-hitch for **Deere** loaders as their "best buy" (1739 Nord Ave., Chico, Calif. 95926; ph 530 342-5379). "The only thing we changed was the release latches, which were located too high. I simply cut them down and welded them back on to solve the problem."

Dick Chatterton, Avon, Ill.: "Of all the tractors we've ever had on our farm, the handiest and most dependable has been our 1960 **Ford** 661," says Dick. "It's easy to operate, handle and service and is equipped with a two-stage clutch and power steering."

Dick's also impressed with his 1990 **Deere** 175 riding mower. "We've mowed hundreds of acres over the years and basic maintenance has kept it running like new. The motor and transmission have been completely trouble-free."

He also liked the deal he got from **Harbor Freight** after he broke the handle on a new ball peen hammer the first time he used it. "The company not only replaced the broken hammer, but sent me their entire five-piece hammer set free-of-charge."

Ward McCown, Troup, Texas: Ward's "best buy" is his 1998 **Dodge** 1-ton 4-WD pickup. "I bought this pickup a couple of months ago and have used it a lot since then. It pulls trailers with ease and gets great gas mileage. The flatbed on it makes hauling feed and other cargo easy. The four built-in toolboxes makes storing tools easier than other flatbeds. It also handles well in the mud."

Pete Shelton, Meeker, Colo.: "It has unbelievable power, whether it's running on the flats or going over passes at 11,000 ft.," says

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