

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

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Pete about his 1997 **Ford F-350** 4-WD pickup equipped with a Powerstroke engine and 5-speed transmission. "It doesn't seem to know what a load is. The Crew Cab makes it as comfortable to ride in as any car."

**Robert Benschheid, Grey Eagle, Minn.:** "I recently bought a mid-1980's **New Holland** baler equipped with a Model 70 thrower that's a 'best buy'. I was going to keep my mid 1970's **New Holland 273** baler equipped with a Model 54A thrower. But the 311 had so much more capacity, ran so much smoother and made nicer bales, I knew I wouldn't use the 273 anymore so I traded it off."

On the "worst buy" side, he's not happy with his **Gehl 250** manure spreader. "The apron has a light shear bolt that breaks much too easily. To change apron speeds is also a hassle. You have to pull a rope on a cam about 4 ft. to change one gear. It gets real tiresome."

He's also disappointed in his **DeLaval** Harmony milkers with DeLaval pulsators. "The pulsators are built so flimsy they break easily if dropped or are bumped hard. The milking unit leaves milk in the bowls so when you switch to another cow, milk runs out of the inflations onto your leg."

**Bob Brown, Barriere, B.C.:** "It's without a doubt the best buy I've ever made," says Bob about his 1940's era **International** Cub tractor. "It's the best workhorse of its size you could ask for. It'll plow a single 12-in. furrow all day and we can use it to push snow no matter how deep it gets."

**John J. Strickland, Alachua, Fla.:** John's most recent "best buy" is a 1997 **Cub Cadet 2284** lawn tractor equipped with a 60-in. belly mower. "The 24 hp Kohler V-twin engine is powerful and snappy. The 60-in. mower is super rugged with grease zerks for the wheels and spindles so maintenance is easy. It's user-friendly and has nice colors and style."

One of John's "worst buys" is a 1994 **McCulloch 16-in.** chain saw. "It's a nightmare to work on because it assembles and disassembles like a Chinese puzzle. And there are a lot of plastic parts to break."

**Mark J. Hammer, Ida Grove, Iowa:** "I recently purchased a **Westendorf TA46** loader, after owning a **Westendorf TA42** loader for 14 years. I never touched the TA42

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with a welder except to replace a worn out tooth on the bucket. I put the TA46 on a different tractor and if it's as good as the TA42 I'll be very pleased."

Mark's "worst buy" is a **DeWalt 358 7/16-in.** dia. circular saw. "The saw only lasted one month past the warranty before the motor shorted out. I'll never buy another DeWalt tool again."

**Michael Reed, Yellow Jacket, Colo.:** "I give this company an A-1 rating," says Mark, pleased with the way the manufacturer stood behind the **EasyCut** sickle system (S.I. Distributing, 03221 Barber Werner Road, St. Mary's, Ohio 45885; ph 800 368-7773) "The EasyCut didn't work in my case because of our unusual soil conditions and a severe go-

pher and prairie dog problem. But the company stood behind the product and refunded all my money, including S&H. It's the most professional, honest company I've ever dealt with. Lots of integrity."

**John Heide, Boulder, Mont.:** "After 19 years, our **Morton** buildings still look like new. Also, our 1991 **MacDon 7000** swather cuts and works well in our tough Montana wild hay, but the paint and decals are in terrible shape. Our **Deere 468** baler is an excellent baler that makes good bales and never misses tying."

On the other hand, he doesn't like his **Sears Craftsman** power washer. "If we'd known there is no way to drain it, we wouldn't have bought it. They say you have to store it in a warm place to prevent damage from freezing."

**Enoch Aarrestad, Debden, Sask.:** "So far, it's been trouble-free," says Enoch, happy with his 1998 **Jiffy** bale shredder (Westward Products Ltd., 6517 67th St., Red Deer, Alberta, Canada T4P 1A3; ph 403 340-1160). "We use it to feed 160 cows and 110 backgrounders. We find it uses a lot less power than other machines we've used. We're also able to control the length of cut and speed of feed discharge by adjusting the speed of the rocking cradle, which moves the bale back and forth over the cutting knives. My only beef is that there are only three short pegs on each side to hold the bale steady in the cradle. Occasionally, it doesn't move the bale back and forth so it could use more pegs, in my opinion."

**Ricky Kirkpatrick, Cottontown, Tenn.:** "It has performed flawlessly planting rye, grasses, and clovers as well as soybeans, oats and wheat into standing stubble and corn stalks," says Ricky about his "best buy" 1996 **Great Plains 10-ft.** no-till drill. "It's straightforward to operate and maintain, and to set up for different situations."

**Charlie Sassmen, Reedsport, Ore.:** Charlie likes his older model **Deere 466** baler, which hasn't given him any problems in two years of use, putting up 400 tons of hay per year. "It bales every bale perfectly and never misses tying one."

He's also pleased with two **Ford 5000** diesel tractors he owns. "One's got 3,000 hours on it, the other's got 2,000 hours on it. They never give us a bit of trouble and are easy on fuel."

On the negative side, he's disappointed with his 1998 **Deere Saber** lawnmower equipped with an 18 hp engine. "It breaks every time I set foot on it. First, it was the steering bar. Then it was a bearing out of the mower deck. Next, a cut-out switch went out on the engine and it wouldn't start. We finally took it back and traded it for a 1998 **Craftsman** with 21 hp engine which we haven't had any trouble with so far."

**Donald Hutson, Paris, Ky.:** "It tows six 1,800 to 2,000-lb. round bales with ease," says Donald, pleased owner of a 1999 **Ford F-250 Super Duty** 4-WD pickup equipped with 5.4-liter engine, automatic transmission, and 4:10 axles. "The truck handles extremely well and has ample power. We like the style of the new Louisville Line. We also like the straight axle and lock in and out manual front hubs."

He also likes his 1996 **Vermeer Super K** baler. "We've made over 3,000 bales with it, no problems."

**Jim Winters, Finch, Ont.:** Jim's "all time best piece of equipment" is his 20-year-old

**International 2250** loader. "It still works great and the best part is the ease with which it goes on and comes off the tractor."

He's also happy with both his 1997 **Case-IH 1020** flex head and his 1998 **Case-IH 600** forage blower. "The head works exceptionally well in down and tangled beans. With the automatic header height control, it's one of the most satisfying machines I've ever operated. As for the forage blower, we had a Model 56 blower for 15 years and thought it was great - until we tried the 600."

On the negative side, "It's not exactly the worst product I've ever owned, but our **New Holland 311** baler gave us considerable trouble. Most of it was with the driveline. I purchased the baler new in 1990 and replaced three or four U-joints per year. When we couldn't seem to find the root of the problem, I finally replaced it with a 575. It's a much better machine."

**David Williams, Croton, Ont.:** "It does a good job of metering seed for accurate planting," says Jim about his **Deere 750** drill. "After trying other types of drills, we came to the conclusion that you've got to match your drill to your soil type. The 750 is best-suited to ours."

**Homer W. Christman, Otterbein, Ind.:** "It's a nice machine and is easy to assemble. I was the problem," says Homer, who found his arthritis prevented him from properly using the **D.R. Trimmer/Mower** he bought last year. "I had to lean forward to push down on

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the handle as I walked because of my back pain. That lifted the cutters too much off the ground for it to trim correctly. The company refunded my money promptly when I returned it to them."

**Debbie McCollum-Foe, Lockport, N.Y.:** Two of Debbie's "best buys" are her 1990 **Case-International 685** tractor and her 1998 **Deere Gator 4** by 2. "The tractor is really easy on fuel and is handy for cutting hay and raking. The Gator is a handy tool for odd jobs around the farm. The automatic dump is especially helpful."

On the "worst buy" side is a 56 by 104-ft. **Walters** building. "The building itself is generally good but the warranty is terrible. We've been trying to get wind damage fixed that occurred under warranty fixed. All we get are empty promises and missed appointments."

**Tom Holm, Idaho Falls, Idaho:** Tom has had good luck with his 1996 **Dodge 3/4-ton** pickup, putting 136,000 miles on it in dusty, rough conditions and mud.

However, he does have one complaint. "They should put a better air filter system on the engine. It's definitely a Mickey Mouse set-up. The second week I had it I got dirt in the engine so I took it back to the dealer. He told me Dodge sometimes had trouble getting the air filters sealed and that a little dirt wouldn't hurt anything. I told him it certainly doesn't do any good, either."

Tom added extra leaf springs to the truck's suspension so it rides more like a 3/4-ton pickup.

Another of his "best buys" is a **Deere 4440** tractor he bought new in 1981. "We haven't had any trouble with it in thousands of hours of use."

**Nelson E. Miller, Millersburg, Ohio:** "A lot of dealers promote their engine horsepower, but what you really need is a good hydraulic pump and this one has it," says Nelson, happy with his 1997 **Hydra-Mac 1700** skid steer loader (Hydra-Mac, 1110 Pennington Ave. S., Thief River Falls, Minn. 56701; ph 800 364-0686 or 218 681-7130). "It handles well and has plenty of hydraulic power. I like the ease with which it starts in cold weather. Also, the Hydra-Mac quick-tach plate will accept any attachment that Bobcat and Case make."

**Michael Thomas, Oakford, Ill.:** Michael likes his **Parascender** powered parachute so much he became a dealer (Parascender Technologies Inc., 1818 E. Bronson Hwy., Kissimmee, Fla. 34744-3726; ph 407 935-0775; fax 0778; website: www.iag.net/~para; E-mail: para@iag.et).



The machine is powered by a 52 hp twin-ignition Rotax engine and 5 1/2-ft. propeller. The back seat was removed to install a 30-gal. tank and 35-ft. spray boom equipped with four electronic rotary disc nozzles that apply chemicals at ultra-low rates. It features a 520 sq. ft. parachute and is capable of carrying a 550-lb. payload.

"Typically, I use it on 100 to 300 acres a year," Michael says. "I use it mostly to broadcast insecticides for rootworms in corn, weevils in hay and army worms in wheat. But it's also excellent for late-season aerial treatment with 2,4-D in corn, wheat, hay and soybeans, applications that would be impossible with conventional spray equipment."

"Compared to a conventional ultra-light aircraft, the powered parachute is safer because it always lands on its wheels. Also, it's easier to store because it's only 9 by 7 ft."

Michael's powered parachute cost about \$12,000 when he bought it new in 1994. More recent models with bigger, 70 hp engines run about \$15,000.

**Floyd Stivers, Stroud, Okla.:** "My only regret is that I didn't buy one years ago," says Floyd, whose "best buy" is a 1997 **Westendorf TA26** front end loader. "It's a true quick-tach loader, taking only a few minutes to attach and detach. That makes it practical to take off when it's not needed. I've seen a lot of other so-called 'quick-tach' loaders that take two hours or more to install and remove."

**Gordon Daniels, Stewartville, Mo.:** Gordon's "worst buy" is his 40 by 60-ft. metal machine shed constructed in 1991 by **Burrow Barn Builders**. "The roof leaks like a sieve. The roofing sheets were put on wrong originally, resulting in an uneven edge at the bottom of the roof. The company put on a new roof but it still leaks. There's no sealer under the bottom side of the roof. Foam was applied on the ridge top but the wind blew it out so that leaks, too. All the rafters are bowed and the shed has big sliding doors with poor quality latches."

"I called the company and the president came out to our farm. He admitted that our complaints were valid and later sent us a let-