

BUYING TIPS YOU CAN USE

Randomly selected farmers “tell it like it is” in nominating their “best” and “worst” buys.

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Farmers Nominate Best, Worst Buys

OPINION

Kelly R. Sharpe, Brighton, Ontario: Kelly nominates his 1988 Ford Ranger extended cab 4-WD pickup as his “worst buy”. “At 25,000 miles it quit running. The company replaced the main computer, changed the oil, and checked the fuel injectors after fuel washed into the oil. I was able to drive it only about 150 miles before it quit again. The company had to make the same repair three more times at a cost of about \$700 each time, but they still couldn’t find the problem. The starter rusted through and I had to replace it.”

“The last time the pickup quit I refused to drive it any more. The spark plugs, wires, fuel injector, and filters were replaced. Then the service manager drove it for about 150 miles until it quit running again. He finally found the problem - a resistor in the wiring harness was causing the computer to malfunction. I sold the pickup and two weeks later I received a phone call from the new owner. He asked if I’d ever had problems with the pickup. He was already on the second transmission.”

On the “best buy” side, he lists his 1990 Kubota HST 1750 4-WD tractor equipped with a front-end loader. “I use it to clean out my heifer and hog barns, to level my yard, and to cut four to five acres of grass around buildings. It has about 2,000 hours on it but

pickup, but it won’t be my last.”

Cliff Metherell, Lashburn, Sask.: “I’ve had excellent, trouble-free performance from my Deere tractors. I put 2,500 hours on my 4430, 2,800 hours on my 4640, and 7,800 hours on my 4650. No major problems with any of them. I traded the 4650 for a 1989 Deere 4955 MFWD model and have only one complaint with it - the radiator is difficult to clean. The operator’s manual says ‘lift the hood and slide the condenser out’. However, it should say, ‘phone your neighbor to come and help you lift the hood’. I solved the problem by cutting a door in the right side of the hood with the hinges up and bolts down, using the same size bolts that hold the condenser in place. This allows me to slide the condenser out and lay it on the front axle, providing complete access to the front part of the radiator in less than two minutes.”

“I made this modification to my 4650 before it even hit the field and also to the 4955. During spring seeding several years ago, the 4640’s used by two neighbors and a 4650 used by another neighbor were running hot because no one has time to mess around cleaning radiators during a busy season. My radiator was running cool.

“My most trouble-free combine ever was a 1977 Deere 7701 pull-type model. I used it for 13 years and went through most harvests without stopping. I now have a 1981 Deere 8820. I installed a chaff spreader on it which works well. However, the spreader makes it difficult to access and adjust the sieve. I solved the problem with the steering wheel and cable from an outboard motor boat. I hooked them up to the bottom sieve. The steering wheel mounts outside the cab on the side of the hopper. It took only a few hours to install and required cutting a hole in the side of the combine next to the sieve. It takes 1 1/2 turns of the steering wheel to open and shut the sieve. Both sides of the sieve are tied together and work in unison. A mark on the steering wheel makes a handy reference point for returning to the original sieve setting.

“I also installed an electric fan speed control and replaced the original chaffer with an airfoil chaffer that needs no adjustment. It eliminates the need to get off the combine in order to set the chaffer and it lets me adjust the bottom sieve without stopping. From the cab I can check the returns, set the fan speed, watch the grain loss monitor, and see the clean grain in the hopper. Once in a while I check behind the combine just to make sure everything is working right.”

Merlin Willand, Boyd, Minn.: “My best buy is my 1987 Ford F-150 pickup equipped with a 300 cu. in. 6-cyl. engine and 4-speed transmission. It has 223,000 miles with no major problems. I replaced the water pump, alternator, starter, and a universal joint. I always use Cenex 518 multi-grade oil and change it every 4,000 miles.”

R. L. Bergeron, New Roads, La.: “My 1987 Deere 855 tractor handles a 6-ft. mower with ease. It has two hydraulic outlets, a differential lock, power steering, 3-pt. hitch, rear, mid, and front pto, cruise control, and turf tires. We use it to cut five acres a week. Scheduled maintenance is all it needs. It’s a beautiful machine.”

Doug Kruse, Canyon City, Ore.: “My best buy is my 1995 Polaris Explorer 4-WD ATV equipped with a 400 cc liquid-cooled engine. I use it to do a lot of chores on our ranch such as repairing fence, checking cattle, plowing snow, spraying weeds, hauling small logs that we use for posts, and more. We had a problem with the 4-WD switch which the dealer took care of immediately.”

has needed only regular maintenance. I’m well satisfied with it.”

Wayne Zimmerman, Joy-Way Farm, McBride, B.C.: “We’re pleased with our 1994 Bobcat 773 skidsteer loader equipped with a Kubota diesel engine. The scissors lift keeps the load vertically straight and allows it to lift big loads high without tipping. We use it with our homemade large materials handling bucket to dig grass silage from our bunker silo, which is more than 10 ft. high, and to load manure into our Deere 780 manure spreader. We’ve used skidsteer loaders for 20 years in our dairy operation. Other brands we’ve owned had problems with the hydraulic drives and loader frames breaking.

“We equipped all the attachments that we use with it - hay wrapper, round bale fork, 8-ft. tire manure scraper, gravel bucket, silage bucket, and log splitter - with Deere quick-tach brackets. The brackets allow us to also use the attachments on our Deere 2755 front-end loader. We built a subframe on the Bobcat quick tach and mounted a hydraulic cylinder operated by an auxiliary valve. It allows us to change attachments without having to get out of the cab.”

D. Allmendinger, Shippenville, Pa.: A 1997 Dodge Ram 1500 pickup rates as his “best buy”. “It’s powerful and roomy and has a great suspension system. It pulls a cattle trailer with ease and offers the power of a tractor and the comfort of a car. The 318 cu. in. Magnum engine gets 15 to 16 mpg with the pickup loaded. This is my first Dodge