

## Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

**Holland** 615 3-pt. mounted disc mower is my best buy. Over the years we've had four different New Holland mowers and have mowed close to 20,000 miles of roadsides in our county. We've put on more than 8,000 miles on this model in just two summers. Some parts on it have worn out, but that's to be expected because we mow in road gear. Overall, they've been good units."

**Arnold L. Madsen, Bovey, Minn.:** Arnold nominates the **American Auto Club**, better known as "Triple A", road atlas as his "best buy". "I'm retired so my wife and I travel a lot. This atlas always gets us where we want to go. All roads, big and small, are included and even most of the little roads are properly numbered or lettered. In comparison, the Rand McNally road atlas leaves out most of that information. I'm not a member of AAA but I buy their road atlas at book stores."

**Terry Sauer, Cambria, Wis.:** "My New Holland TC240 4-WD compact tractor equipped with a front-end loader and 60-in. belly mower is my best buy. I use this tractor all year long to mow our lawn, plow snow, and do other chores. The 4-WD has gotten me out of a lot of trouble, and it also helps whenever I have a full bucket of gravel and need more weight on back. My only complaint is that you can't get this tractor equipped with a hard cab. Also, the pins that hold the mower on kept falling out. However, I was able to fix that problem."

**Lonny Gervais, Cromwell, Minn.:** "My 3-pt. mounted, pto-driven Farni logging winch is my best buy. We use it to log 50 to 60 cords of wood each year. No problems. It has a 160-ft. cable so I don't need to make a road to every tree I cut. This product has made our firewood gathering much easier and also helps provide some additional farm income."

**Jason Goodridge, Afton, Iowa:** "I'm well pleased with my 2005 **Cub Cadet** 1050 riding mower equipped with a 50-in. deck. I've already put about 70 hours on it with no problems. It's user friendly, and the deck is easy to service."

**Danny Hege, Olar, S.C.:** "I'm well pleased with my **Case IH** 8920 tractor. I bought it four years ago as a lease return with 800 hours on it. No problems. It has a lot of power and is reliable. I'm also pleased with my **Gruett** silage wagons (Gruett's Inc., Potter, Wis.; ph 920 853-3516; www.gruett.com). These wagons have been trouble-free. They're well built and should last a long time."

**Paul Grisso, Roanoke, Va.:** "My **Mantis** rototiller equipped with a Honda engine is handy to use. On rocky ground I pull it backward to keep from jamming rocks in the tines. It works great in small areas."

"My **Harbor Freight** 1/2-in., 18-volt cordless drill is my worst buy. The problem is the chuck won't stay in the body of the drill. This tool was cheap so I guess you get what you pay for."

**William Rieckens, Bellevue, Iowa:** "I bought a **Sears** garage door opener for my shop in 1977. Over the years it has never failed, even though it has been opened and closed thousands of times."

**Monte Blue, Troy, Mo.:** "I bought my **Allis Chalmers** WD tractor from my brother-in-law for \$400. I've used it to pull logs for firewood, plant crops, do road work, etc."

"I've had my **Ferguson** T-20 tractor for only a year but it has never failed to start, even during the winter."

"My **Struck** tracked tractor powered by a 15 hp Kohler engine and equipped with both a blade and bucket is a worst buy. One problem is the gas tank is too small. Another is that the engine doesn't have as much power as advertised and it's hard to get at. This tractor has a Japanese-made carburetor which is

hard to get parts for. A new carburetor sells for well more than \$100."

**Leon L. Bailey, Elkton, Va.:** "It's the best wood chipper I've ever used," says Leon, pleased with his 2005 **Dr. Chipper** 3-pt. mounted wood chipper (Country Home Products, Vergennes, Vt.; ph 800 687-6575; www.countryhomeproducts.com). It's easy to hook up to my tractor and works great with brush up to 4 1/2 in. in dia. It'll take any type of wood and reduce it to chips. I've used it for 500 hours with no problems."

**John H. Markham, Newport, N.C.:** A 2000 **Ford** F-150 Lariat pickup rates as John's "best buy". "It's reliable and fuel efficient, getting 22 mpg on the open road. We've had only one problem with it, and the dealer replaced the part under warranty. I didn't know it even had a warranty because I bought this pickup used with about 36,000 miles on it. The repair was made at 67,000 miles."

**Elvin Pritts, Guide Rock, Neb.:** "My 1995 **Oldsmobile** 88 has more than 165,000 miles and gets 32 to 38 mpg. It has had very few mechanical problems and a very comfortable ride."

**Wayne A. Beggs, Lincolnton, Ga.:** "In 1984 my dad traded his **Allis Chalmers** B tractor for a 1924 **New Williams** 18-in. corn grist mill. It still works great and I haven't had to buy any corn meal since 1985. I think he made a good deal. I give away some of my corn meal as Christmas gifts. Grist mills were common in the South at one time."

**Marion E. Carter, Frenchburg, Ky.:** "My **Deere** Gator is by far the handiest machine I've ever owned. I can't see how anyone could get along without it. It serves as both a small pickup and also as a general all-around utility vehicle. It always starts right up and seems to run forever on a tank of gas. It'll go about anywhere on our farm. If I want I can even ride it to church on Sunday."

**Ronald Morgan, Dunlap, Tenn.:** "My **Taylor** wood-fired outdoor furnace is my best buy (Taylor Mfg., Elizabethtown, N.C. ph 800 545-2293; www.taylormfg.com). I use it to heat our home and all our hot water. It's designed with enough capacity to heat two residences and provide hot water for both, or to heat a house and garage as well as a swimming pool. There are many options available."

**Greg Nenni, Middletown, Ohio:** "My 1956 **Massey Ferguson** TO-35 tractor is my best buy. I bought it used five years ago when we moved to a new 20-acre home. It has a lot of power. I use it to bush hog six acres of pasture and to pull an 8-ft. harrow. It has excellent traction, power, and strength. I also use it to plow snow, drive posts, level the driveway, etc. I can change the points and plugs myself because everything is accessible and easy to work on. This tractor always starts, even in the coldest weather, and is a 6-volt positive ground. It's a pretty cool old tractor."

**Gary Alford, Edwardsburg, Mich.:** "We have a lot of different **Stihl** power equipment, with a lot of different people operating them, and they all perform well. Some are more than 20 years old but still work fine."

"Our **Deere** HPX 4-WD Gators equipped with a 20 hp gas engine are worst buys. We bought four Gators and all of them are hard to start - even at temperatures of 90 degrees or higher. All of them have been back to the dealer at least once, and one model has been back twice. They run better now but they're still tricky to start, even after they've been running at operating temperature. I don't know why Deere didn't make these Gators fuel-injected like they do on their 20 hp model 445 riding mowers."

"We had extra alternators put on, but it wasn't long before a fan belt rubbed through

the upper radiator hose. The same problem was starting to happen with another Gator before we caught it. To solve the problem we tied the hoses back. Another problem is that if you get the machine equipped with a R.O.P.S., you have to remove the windshield because otherwise it'll suck in dust real badly. If you're thinking about purchasing a Gator, I think it would be a real good idea to test one of them for a few days before you buy. A Gator equipped with a diesel engine might work better, but it costs a lot more. In my opinion, there are a lot of other brands on the market worth looking at."

**Gerald Zimmerman, Lititz, Penn.:** A 1994 **Chevrolet** pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter diesel engine rates as Gerald's "best buy". "It has required only routine maintenance. We have a **K & N** air filter on it (K & N Engineering, Riverside, Calif. ph 800 858-3333 or 951 826-4000) and also a **Banks** computer chip that bumps up horsepower (Banks Power; ph 888 601-8072; www.bankspower.com). This is the most reliable pickup I've ever owned."

**Glenn W. Friant, Sr., Morris, Ill.:** "My 1996 **Ford** Ranger XLT pickup is my worst buy. I bought it used with about 82,000 miles on it. The owner told me he had no problems with this vehicle. But two days later the dome light wouldn't go off, so I had to pull the fuse. Five days later the 'check engine' light came on and it cost \$140 to fix. Nine days later the catalytic converter went out and that cost \$250. Fourteen days later the windshield wipers went out. Nineteen days later, the heater and temperature control stripped and I couldn't turn the heat down or turn the air conditioner on. I fixed the problem myself by running a throttle cable to the main control door, allowing me to regulate both heat and air conditioning."

"Twenty five days later the automatic transmission went out without warning. It cost \$1,400 to take care of that problem. Now everything is working okay, but I'm just waiting for something else to happen. I think this pickup is possessed. I also think the guy I bought it from was real lucky to sell it when he did, or else he was psychic."

**E.W. Shults, Coloma, Mich.:** "My best buy is my 1973 **Power King** Economy 1614 lawn tractor, which I bought new. I've used it to mow our lawn every year since I bought it, and it's still going strong. These tractors were built the way I would build one. You won't find any aluminum or pot metal on them. They have an automotive drive system right off the Kohler engine, individual wheel brakes just like on big tractors, a 3-pt. hitch, and hydraulics. In recent years I've bought two other Power King tractors - another 1614 and a 2418 - and restored both to like-new condition. I also found an original Power King front-end loader for the 2418."

**Rodney C. Smith, Powhatan, Va.:** Rodney bought a **Banks** exhaust brake for his 2002 **Chevrolet** Duramax diesel pickup. It's his "worst buy". "We use the pickup to tow our trailer in mountainous country. When speed drops to 45 mph, the transmission makes a violent, hard shift from third to second gear. It doesn't happen if we're not using the exhaust brake. We've made several phone calls and written letters to the company, and every time we call we get a promise that they will take it up with 'engineering' and call us back. However, they never call and didn't even bother to answer our letter. Obviously this company doesn't provide good customer support. I'm afraid to use this brake and plan to remove it from the truck. I'm sorry I invested the \$1,400 for parts and labor."

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