

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

Rob Grant, Harlem, Ga.: "My 1982 Husqvarna 44 Rancher 16-in. chain saw has never let me down and is still going strong. I use it to cut several loads of firewood and fence posts every year. The engine still has so much compression that I have to replace the cord every two or three years.

"My 1996 S&H two-horse trailer is my worst buy. Paint started peeling immediately after I bought it and all the joints had to be caulked. Now rust is forming under every piece of caulking, and since the floor isn't treated I'll probably have to replace it soon. I may have to sandblast the entire trailer in order to keep it from rusting away."

Lee Kissinger, Jackson, Wis.: Lee hired Kinze Mfg. to repower his Deere 8640 tractor with a Cummins 855 diesel engine. "This tractor is put together very well and is built strong. However, it started developing engine problems at about 2,600 hours and I had to have the original engine overhauled twice. The last overhaul lasted less than 250 hours. The third time I went to Kinze to repower it. It eliminated all the problems I had before. The Cummins 855 engine is excellent and has unbelievable power and torque. I can pull a load with the tractor almost at idle. When I move the throttle ahead the tractor just takes off. Repowering wasn't cheap, but it cost less than the two engine overhauls and only about one third the cost of a brand new engine of the same size. The tractor now has about 8,000 hours on it.

"It would be a good move to buy a tractor with engine problems and then have Kinze repower it. I had my tractor repainted so now it looks new.

"When Deere designed this tractor they should never have designed the engine to be part of the tractor frame. The engine never ran right. The service rep said we had too much power one time, and then the next time said that the water pump ran too fast. I wrote to Deere a couple times but didn't get much of a response. Poor design and inferior parts

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caused this problem, but the company won't admit it because they know that if they did it would cost them millions of dollars."

Terry Corman, Fort Collins, Colo.: "You can't go wrong with this product," says Terry, impressed with Plast-aid, a two-part repair compound that consists of a liquid and powder. You mix the two together to form a hard, durable, waterproof plastic that sets up in only about 15 minutes (Plast-aid Corporation, Box 2156, Estes Park, Colo. 80517 ph 970 577-1000; Website: www.plast-aid.com/).

According to the company, the product can be used to make a wide variety of repairs and works great for everyday broken items at home, work and in the shop. For example, at home it can be used to fix cracks in dropped cell phones, remote controls, and hair dryers; to repair stripped-out hinges, broken toys, computer housings, and refrigerator shelves; to repair handles on pots and pans; and to fix stripped-out screw holes in wood. It works great for PVC plumbing repairs, because instead of having to cut out the damaged PVC you can just patch it. On cars and recreational

vehicles you can use it to fix cracked panels and fenders, stripped knobs, broken light lenses, and even to plug radiator leaks. The product can even be colored and made into parts.

"It's like having your own liquid plastic," says Corman. "I learned about Plast-aid from my brother, who works at an auto body shop and uses the product to make repairs. It's crazy looking stuff and has a terrible smell, but once the product sets the smell goes away. My brother mixes it into a thick paste that's almost like a putty, which he uses to build up studs on the back side of car parts. Once it sets up Plast-aid becomes very tough - almost as hard as a rock.

"I used Plast-aid to repair trim work inside my 1986 Buick Somerset car. I had to pull the trim loose so I could fix some stuff behind it. I used Plast-aid to repair cracks that developed in the trim. I also used it to repair my son's broken action figure toys. You can pour this stuff into a hole that's all stripped out and let it set up, then drill it and tap it to take screws."

Plast-aid is available in 0.75-oz., 1.5-oz., and 6-oz. kits. They sell for \$7.95 to \$19.95 plus S&H.

Emory Spiegelberg, Larsen, Wis.: "The worst product I bought recently was a Ryobi high wheel, 18-in. string trimmer mower powered by a 5 hp gas engine. The problem is that the rewind starter wouldn't work right, and as a result the trimmer string won't go around"

Curtis Holmes, Graham, Mo.: "We really like our 2002 Kawasaki 400 4-wheeler. We use it for spraying crops and for checking cows. This is the second one we've owned. It has a smooth-running, reliable belt drive system - in 7,000 miles we've had only one belt break.

"Our Campbell Hausfeld 3/8-in. air ratchet is a worst buy. My dad says it pinches his hand whenever he uses it."

Tony and Mary Wortmann, Stanton, Neb.: "Recently we needed to do some engine work on a 1950's vintage International 300 tractor and found that we could still purchase most parts for it at our Case-IH dealer. We thought that was great. In contrast, we recently bought a new computer for \$2,000. Six months later we couldn't even get parts for it. The software is buggy, and after two years this computer is almost worthless.

"What's wrong with this picture? One company is still supporting its products 50 some years after introducing them, while the other one won't support its products for even a year.

"Another worst buy is all the money we've invested in the Pork and Beef Check-off programs. What a total waste of money for small farmers. These check-off programs are great for the retailers, the media, and the packers. However, they're very destructive for small pork and beef producers and are putting them out of business left and right. Nebraska pork production has dropped more than 50 percent since the 'pork tax' was put into effect. It's a total waste of money for us."

George H. Baker, Sr., Dunlap, Ill.: "My Honda walk-behind, 21-in. hydrostatic lawn mower is my worst buy. I paid \$980 for it but was able to use it for only about 45 minutes before the blade clutch seized and the mower quit working. The dealer came out to look at the machine but refused to give me



The Toyota Prius automatically alternates between gas and electric.

"Best Buy" Toyota Hybrid

Brian and Marsha Salisbury, St. Louis, Mo., are happy with the performance of their recently purchased Toyota Prius gas/electric hybrid car.

"We actually get better mileage in traffic jams than we do over the road," says Marsha about the 5-passenger car.

FARM SHOW unexpectedly met up with Marsha when she showed up at the Walt and Carol Gregory farm near Dow, Ill., to buy some asparagus. Dow is located across the Mississippi River from St. Louis and a few miles further north. Marsha drives quite a bit between St. Louis and Belleville, Ill.

We called a Toyota dealer in St. Louis for

information about the gas/electric car. He told us the car automatically alternates between gas and electric. There's a 32-cell battery in the rear part of the car. It is alternately being charged and drawn upon to propel the car. The extra mileage in traffic jams results from using no gasoline at all. The only gas/electric cars on the market are made by Toyota and Honda. Currently, there are no American-made gas/electric cars.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brian and Marsha Salisbury, St. Louis, Mo. (ph 314 653-1170) or Lou Fusz, the Toyota dealer in St. Louis, Mo. (ph 314 966-5404).

a full refund. He took it back to the shop for repairs."

Jack D. Loveless, White Cloud, Mich.: Jack says his 1984 Mantis rototiller rates as

"We spent \$2,000 on it, but six months later we couldn't even get parts for it."

his "best buy". "Over the years I've spent a total of only about \$80 for repairs. It works great in raised garden beds. I use it to make rows and to make compost. I also use it during the winter to chop snow and ice off my sidewalk. I'm 75 years old, but both me and my Mantis are still going strong."

Alan Eberly, Port Clinton, Ohio: "My Ford 39-30 tractor is my best buy. It replaced a Ford 1900 model, which was a good tractor but was underpowered. The 39-30 has more power.

"My Water Hog pond pump is my worst buy. The problem is that the pump shuts down after running for only about 20 minutes, and I have to keep turning it back on all the time."

Darin Miller, Wamego, Kansas: "My 1993 Oldsmobile Silhouette minivan just keeps on running. I bought it used with about 140,000 miles and have put another 80,000 miles on it. It's equipped with a 3,800 cc V-6 engine that has plenty of power. It has plastic body panels that are easy to clean and are dent and rust resistant."

Dan Maciosek, Westfield, Wis.: Dan's impressed with his Porter Cable 19.2-volt cordless drill and saw. "I'm a general contractor and have used a lot of cordless tools over the years. However, these are the best. Long lasting batteries and durable on the job site."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists his Campbell Hausfeld "contractor's model" airless sprayer. "It lasted for only a very short time after I bought it. The company won't repair it so now I'm forced to throw it away. This machine is hard to clean, overheats, and doesn't spray consistently. I wasted my money on it."

Morris Beckman, Junction City, Kansas: "It gets more than 40 mpg and still runs like a sewing machine," says Morris about his 1990 Honda Civic. "It has required only routine maintenance, including new tires and a new battery."

Steve Wilkerson, Dahlgren, Ill.: "I like my Greasemaster electric grease pump. I bought it about five years ago from an industrial salvage dealer. It's one of the finest tools I've come across in a long time. It consists of a 5-gal. pail of grease with an



electric motor mounted on top of the cover plate. The motor drives a shaft that goes down inside the bucket and is connected to a small can and pump, which pumps the grease out.

"I carry it in the back of my pickup and power it off the truck's 12-volt battery. The original model was designed to operate on six volts. It pumped too fast and drew too much current. I converted it to run on 12 volts by modifying the motor's field coils. I do heavy equipment excavating so I have to pump a lot of grease. I had been pumping

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