

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

(Continued from previous page)

makes the best mowers for this kind of work.

"My worst buy was a **Chevrolet S10** pickup equipped with an extended cab and fully loaded. In 7,000 miles it was in the shop seven times for problems with the EGR valve and exhaust sensors. I couldn't get anyone to fix it so at 7,700 miles I traded it off.

"Our 2000 **Dodge Dakota** Quad Cab 4-door pickup is a best buy. It's a lot better truck than the Chevrolet S-10 pickup we owned before. The Dodge has been in the shop only once and that was for a very minor adjustment."

Jeff Merwin, Clarksburg, Calif.: "We like our 1997 **Caterpillar** Challenger Super 35 tractor which we use to pull our **Case-III** 4900 32-ft. Vibra Tiller field cultivator. The cultivator is also a best buy. We can get into the field a week earlier with tracks and, with the field cultivator, we can open 200 acres a day with virtually no compaction. The Challenger is comfortable to operate and quite fuel efficient."

Stanley Fehorau, Hutchinson, Kan.: "My 1990 **Nissan** 4-WD pickup is my best buy. It has more than 285,000 miles on it with only the clutch and timing belt replaced. I change the oil every 3,000 miles and all the other fluids every spring."

Rich Vink, Topeka, Kan.: "I like my new **Milwaukee** 1/2-in., 14.4-volt cordless drill-driver. I bought it to replace an old Makita cordless drill. The batteries last a long time before they have to be recharged. One time I accidentally dropped the drill from about 10 ft. up an extension ladder. It bounced off the bench and onto the concrete floor, but still ran fine.

"My 1999 **Swischer** 60-in. pull-type mower worked good for cutting very thin grass, but it wouldn't work under normal mowing conditions. Even with sharp blades and good belts it would windrow the grass, no matter how slow I mowed with it. The deck design was too square and had no curve to it, which prevented the grass from being discharged well."

Emmett Ross, Stilwell, Okla.: Emmett's "all-time best buy" is his 1978 **International Harvester** 684 tractor which he bought used 10 years ago. "I haven't had any major problems with it.

"My **D.R.** weed trimmer is my worst buy. It started using oil about two months after I bought it. It turned out a vent tube was missing. I think it was probably left off at the factory. I had to replace the engine with a Briggs & Stratton at my own cost."

Fred Habekost III, West Alexandria, Ohio: "My **DeWalt** 14.4-volt cordless drill has been extremely dependable and has a lot of power. It survived a 25-ft. fall from a barn roof to the concrete floor below. The rechargeable battery flew off, and the case was completely cracked. However, when I pulled the trigger the drill started right up. I'm still using this drill months later, wrapped in duct tape."

Douglas Dougherty, Rose Hill, Kan.: "A forged bale spear I bought from **Value-Bilt Parts** is my best buy (3915 Delaware, Box 3330, Des Moines, Iowa 50316). I bought it after my old bale spear broke. The new one is a dual spear that has a greatly improved ability to move bales to specific locations. I like it so well we bought a second one so we can use one for loading bales in the field and one for unloading bales at our storage area

30 miles away."

Jerald Pickle, Moorhead, Iowa: Jerald's the pleased owner of a 2000 **Dodge** Ram 1500 extended cab pickup. "I'm well satisfied with it except I think it uses too much fuel. It gets 14 to 18 mpg. The only problem we've had was that the upper radiator hose was laying on the air conditioner line. We had it fixed.

"My 1999 **Chevrolet** Silverado extended cab pickup equipped with a 5.3-liter engine is my worst buy. The passenger side heater wouldn't work and the dealer never fixed it. One or the other of the running lights was out most of the time. We live on a gravel road and the Firestone Wilderness tires got holes in them at least once a week. The accelerator pedal stuck and it took three months to get new parts, but they didn't solve the problem, either. Also, the pickup jerked while traveling at low speeds in the city. The problem was that the factory had put the wrong type of oil in the transfer case. However, this pickup was easy on fuel."

Richard Wolf, Wishek, N.Dak.: "My nomination for worst buy is my 1993 **Buick**, which I bought used. At 88,000 miles, the motor has a knock in it, the heater doesn't work all the time, and the transmission has a whine to it. I took it back to the dealer I bought it from and he said 'they just do that'. I checked further and found that some 93's had too much clearance in the front main bearing and the factory had put out a service bulletin about it in June of 1993. I tried to get the bulletin but they are out of print.

"My best buy is a 1986 **Toyota** pickup I bought used. It now has 225,000 miles on it and drives like it has just 50,000. The only problems it has ever had are small items."

Jeff Burns, Maypearl, Tex.: "The heels on my **Rocky** work boots wore down prematurely. They strated breaking apart long



before the tread was worn. This was the second pair of Rocky boots I've owned and this happened to both of them. Three friends of mine have also had the problem. I e-mailed the manufacturer about my problem and they offered to send me new soles, but I would have to pay to have them put on. I didn't feel that was an adequate solution because obviously Rocky boots knows these boots have a problem."

Spencer E. Sells, Beaver Creek, Minn.: Spencer's impressed with his 1999 **Top Air** hydraulic-fold 3-pt. sprayer boom. "It's built heavy and folds quickly. No problems. I'd recommend it to anyone."

Barney D. Caldwell, Rustburg, Va.: "My 1989 **Ford** F-150 4-WD pickup equipped with a 4.9-liter 6-cyl. engine and 4-speed manual transmission is my best buy. It has almost 100,000 miles on it but the brakes are still in good shape. We've used it to pull wagons and tractors and to haul hay, etc. It still runs great and doesn't use any oil."

David K. Curtis, Sedalia, Colo.: David's happy with his 2000 **Ford** F-250 4-WD pickup equipped with a Power Stroke engine,

automatic transmission, and 3:73 rear end. "It starts quickly, warms up fast, and gets a respectable 18 to 21 mpg. It has a lot of power and the heater and sound system are excellent. It's comfortable to drive and the instruments are attractive and easy to read. The outside rear view mirrors provide great visibility, due to the way the doors are designed at the bottom of the window glass.

"My 1999 **Chevrolet** C2500 pickup equipped with a 6.5-liter diesel engine is my worst buy. It has no power. The valve covers, oil pan, and rear main seal leaked oil; the engine wouldn't start when the temperature was below freezing; the door hinges on the

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cab wore out right away; trim inside and outside the cab fell off; and paint flaked off. Most of the time it's in the shop waiting to be fixed."

Leroy Klesel, Hallettsville, Texas: "My **Westendorf** TA26 front-end loader is my best buy. I really like the bucket-mounting system. The loader itself is also easy to take off and put back on and doesn't require any tools. The company offers many different size loaders to fit any tractor."

Jason Meyer, Avon, Ill.: "My dad's 1977 **Deere** 4430 tractor is our best buy. We rely on it for most of our field work. It still has the original engine, which now has just under 11,000 hours on it and has never been overhauled. We won't be buying a new tractor any time soon, but we don't need to because this one works so well."

Padraigh Plunkett, Tullamore, Ireland: "My 2000 **Major** 2,400-gal. L.G.P. vacuum tank reduced my fertilizer cost by 30 percent last year and is a best buy. There's a hog farm 4 1/2 miles from me and with the cost of artificial fertilizer up by 20 to 40 percent it should save me another 30 percent this year."

Stuart Klingel, Nazareth, Pa.: "My worst buy of all time is my 1993 **Belarus** 825 tractor. It has had a lot of problems including hydraulic failure (twice), malfunctioning brakes, wiring problems, and an fuel injection pump that had to be replaced. All of these problems happened within the first 60 hours of use. The company took the tractor back and gave us another new one but unfortunately we had the same problems with that one, too. Also, the new model started to blow oil out the exhaust.

"We used the tractor only for light duty work. One day my dad was using the tractor to pull two empty wagons when the thumb screw holding the telescoping steering wheel worked itself loose. The steering column came apart and my dad lost steering control. The tractor veered off the road and hit a tree, which caused a lot of damage to the tractor and injured dad. The tractor was taken back to the dealer. They fixed the damage to the outside and put the steering column back together, but they couldn't guarantee us that it would stay together. They said the oil blow-by had been fixed and that the problem was 'just a loose bolt'. However, while the tractor was still at the dealer we noticed fresh oil running down the exhaust stack.

"They said they would fix the engine problems but they didn't and we've been in

litigation since 1995. The company finally made a financial compensation offer in December of 1999, but we turned it down because it was less than what we paid for the tractor. Then in March of 2000 we found out that Belarus is in bankruptcy. But they have a parent company so our lawyer is pressing on. Our tractor has been at the dealer's since January of 1995 even though we paid for it in full. I'd like to hear from anyone who has had similar problems."

Ross McGehee, Natchez, Miss.: "Our **Vermeer** 605-L baler is our best buy. We replace balers every three years to keep current with warranties and new technology. The company always fixes the little things that you hardly even notice when they update their machines. We're continually impressed with their design improvements and are looking forward to operating a new 605 XL model that we recently purchased."

Timothy Steichen, Wellborn, Fla.: "My 1998 **Deere** 4 by 2 Gator is well made, dependable, always starts and has required only routine maintenance. The only improvement I'd like to see is a backup light. I've put 1,200 hours on our Gator with no problems at all."

Robert Lee Mollenhauer, Bison, Okla.: "My 1997 **Buick** LeSabre car is my best buy. It gets 31 to 36 mpg on trips and handles great. A very comfortable ride."

"My **Deere** 175 Hydro lawn mower is my worst buy. The engine didn't start well until I installed an electric fuel pump on it. It also 'ate up' belts until I lined the pulleys up. I bought it new so I expected better."

Sam Burgeson, Ashville, N.Y.: "My best buy is my **Jensen** two-way radio. I never go into the woods without it. My wife can call me or I can call her even if I'm two miles away from the house. I carry the radio in my shirt pocket. I can hear a call and talk on it when operating a tractor. It's an absolute must when you're out working alone."

Wayne W. Harley, New Brighton, Pa.: Wayne's impressed with his 1996 **Massey Ferguson** 240 tractor equipped with a Massey Ferguson 236 front-end loader and combination bucket. He bought it used when it was two years old. "Even though it's equipped with a diesel engine, it always starts easy, even in the coldest weather. It hasn't needed any repairs. It's built rugged and has a fold-down roll-over protective structure, which is helpful whenever we clean out manure from the free-stall area of our barn. It's fuel efficient and I like the features on it."

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I'd certainly buy another one.

"I'm also pleased with my 1998 **Dodge** 1500 1/2-ton pickup. I haven't had any problems with it and it's the most comfortable pickup I've ever owned. I think it's the best looking pickup on the road. When I hit a deer last spring with the truck it just bounced off the grill without causing any damage. It now has about 25,000 miles on it."

Dustin Pentz, Coalville, Utah: "My 1997 **DeWalt** 14.4-volt cordless drill is my best buy. It's the second one I've owned. The first one was so good someone stole it from me on a job. It's a great product."