

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

Tell Us About Your “Best or Worst” Buy
Send your nominations to:
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Norman Blowers, Chambersburg, Penn.: “I ordered a loader for my Deere LA115 on June 16, 2009 from Robert Labonte of **Kelly Products**, Friendship, Tenn. (featured in Vol. 33, No. 3). I paid in advance, since that was required, and Mr. Labonte cashed the \$1,650 check immediately. In July he shipped the arms that attach to the tractor frame. Since that time, there have been 28 emails back and forth but the rest of the loader never shipped. We even talked several times by telephone. He sounded cooperative until April 1, 2010 but has been totally silent since then. The post office just returned an unclaimed registered letter I sent to him. This was definitely the worst buy I’ve ever made.”

Keith Carfield, Rushville, Ind.: Keith had problems with his 2010 3660 **Kinze** planter. “Poor engineering, drive chains hitting the frame, and nobody – dealership or Kinze – would help set up the cobalt monitor which caused me to plant double the population I wanted. Information in the owner’s manual was very minimal. The local dealer only had one person who knew anything about the machine and it took Kinze three days to return my calls during planting season.”

you’d think would require a much bigger tractor, such as lifting big poles and hauling gravel. It’s fuel-efficient and has well-placed controls. No problems.

“My 2008 **Chevrolet** Silverado 1500 4-WD pickup is my worst buy. The rear bumper rusted through within 2 years, but the company wouldn’t replace it because the 36,000-mile warranty had expired. The pickup has about 42,000 miles on it.”

Mark LaSalle, Sumter, S.C.: Mark uses **Lincoln** Idealarc 250 stick welders at a welding school, where he maintains equipment. “These welders are tough and powerful. We use them to do stick and scratch-start TIG welding, and they’ve survived student and commercial use for decades. They’re a classic transformer machine with no delicate PC boards. They’re extremely reliable.”

He’s disappointed with his **Metabo** 6 and 9-in. angle grinders. “The problem is that the company changed the design. The old ‘all green’ 6-in. grinder was a great grinder, but the new ‘black and green’ 9-in. grinders don’t hold up nearly as well. They have poor guards that stretch and come loose.

“Our **DeWalt** 28494 series 9-in. grinders are cheaper, more reliable, and equipped with much better guards.”

Joe Park, Carrollton, Ill.: Joe nominates his 2006 **Hustler** Fastrak 52-in. zero turn riding mower as his “best buy”. “We use this machine to mow 5 acres. With a week to go on the 4-year warranty, one of the hydro transmission pumps malfunctioned, which would have been an expensive repair. When I called the company to order a part, I was told the machine was still under warranty and that I should contact a local dealer to have it repaired. They fixed it and the machine works like new. Hustler really stood behind this product.”

Hiram W. Wilson, Hermitage, Tenn.: “It’s the best riding and driving truck I’ve ever had, and I’m 79 years old,” says Hiram, pleased with his 2009 **Chevrolet** Avalanche crossover truck.

Eugene Hartenstein, Abilene, Kan.: Eugene’s happy with his 1991 **Toyota** Tacoma pickup. “I bought this pickup used for a grandson. It had 118,000 miles on it and had been used on a rural mail route. My grandson drove it for a few years with no problems. Then he wanted a bigger pickup, so I bought it back, and a granddaughter drove it. Then she passed the pickup on to her younger brother. In a few years, he went to a bigger pickup so I bought it back for the third time. It has been used as a knock-around farm truck, and now my second grandson is using it again to save miles on his newer, bigger pickup. The Tacoma has more than 240,000 miles on it but is still going strong. It has required only routine maintenance.”

Don Hartley, Murphy, Idaho: Don’s the satisfied owner of a pair of **Ford** pickups equipped with Powerstroke diesel engines, one a 1997 model and the other a 2001. “I’ve replaced the transmission twice on the 1997 model but the engine is still solid. This pickup has about 250,000 miles on it but still doesn’t use a drop of oil. The 2001 model has 85,000 miles. The only problem I ever had was a driveline vibration, which the dealer promptly took care of.”

Carrol R. Johnson, Barrett, Minn.: “My best buy of all time is my 1958 **Allis Chalmers** B-12 garden tractor. I bought it new with a mower, snowblower, and rototiller. We still use it to till our garden. It has the best mower deck ever made.”

Harry Hamilton, Henderson, Texas: Harry nominates his 2007 **Deere** 5103 tractor as his “worst buy”. “Six months after I bought this tractor the control levers for the rear lift froze up which caused the lift to quit working. The dealer said this problem commonly happens when the lift isn’t used

One the plus side, Keith likes his 2010 **Rogator**. “It’s a pleasure to operate. The controls are very user friendly. No problems.”

James Kennedy, Troutville, Va.: “Two years ago I bought a worn-out 1954 **Ford** Jubilee tractor for \$3,500. It came with 7 pieces of equipment in very good condition that were worth more than I paid for the whole works. I disassembled the entire tractor, rebuilding and restoring it at a cost of \$1,600. It’s now a fine machine that gets a lot of use.

“Another best buy is my 1986 **Chevy** 1/2 ton pickup. I’ve owned it 21 years and it



has 196,000 miles on it without any engine work. I have changed oil every 3,000 miles and the filter every 6,000 miles and it’s still going strong. Me and that truck are growing old together.”

Kevin Fulton, Litchfield, Neb.: “We’re well-satisfied with our four **Honda** 4-wheelers, but especially like the Rancher models. We find them to be durable and dependable. One Rancher model has 25,000 miles on it but still runs like new. These vehicles get ridden hard on our ranch under all types of adverse conditions.”

Martin Michalec, White Sulphur Springs, Mont.: “I’ve used my **Bobcat** CT225 4-WD compact tractor to do jobs