

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

While it's not as big as many wheel rakes, it works well on my small hay fields. With only two carrying wheels, it's very maneuverable. I can turn sharp corners and still make a nice windrow."



Wilson Beidler, Richfield, Penn.: "I'm happy with my 12 by 12 **Chicken Ranger** coops (www.chickenrangoop.com; ph 717-768-0747). The design is well thought out and assembly was fairly simple with the included instructions. Taking apart for winter is very straightforward—take the top off and loosen four hose clamps. They're easy to move, shed rain well, and the steel frames are more economical (less than half the price of aluminum). The 10-oz. vinyl material tarp stood up well in a recent storm with golf ball-sized hail."

Steven Archambault, Charlotte, N.C.: "I bought a Chicago Tools 4-in. grinder from **Harbor Freight** about 2 years ago, and the thing is a beast. I've been taking apart and cutting up automotive leaf springs for forging knives and other weapons, and this tool makes that job easy. The only way to describe the performance is that it doesn't stop. Despite long periods of use, it doesn't heat up or stumble."

On the negative side is an after-market headlight assembly Steven bought for his Cub Cadet 2146 ride-on mower. "I installed the unit without any trouble, but the second time I mowed the lawn, the headlight lens fell out, and I ran it over, destroying it. The manufacturer wouldn't give me any satisfaction, stating that the mower was too old. The assembly I bought certainly wasn't."

Gerald Coles, Murray, Ky.: "I have a 4-in. **DeWalt** 20-volt grinder that survived a 90-ft. fall from the top of our elevator onto concrete. It cracked, the battery was knocked out, the disc broke, and the handle was chipped. I don't recommend testing this way. I was happy and surprised to find it still worked fine."



Richard Caldwell, Bethany, W.Va.: "My 2022 **Hypertherm** Powermax45 XP plasma cutter is a great buy. It cuts thick or thin steel and aluminum with ease. I've fabricated steel to fill the holes in a used gravity wagon to reuse to store grain. It worked great at cutting the tin to the length I needed to fill the corners to plug the holes in the gravity wagon sides so the grain didn't flow out."

Curt Blaske, Sauk Centre, Minn.: "In 2007, I bought a 2002 5-speed, 4-cyl. **Ford** Ranger with 106,286 miles on it. I bought it for my daily 70-mile (roundtrip) drive to work. It now has 272,000 miles on it. All it's ever needed was basic maintenance. Best buy ever."

John Richey, Country Club, Mo.: "My **Harbor Freight** Atlas pole saw and hedge

trimmer work well. But the 80-volt Atlas string trimmer is hard to re-string. Also, I'm not strong enough to turn the knob. I need to have someone help me with it."

Tom Borer, Clearwater, Neb.: "My 2022 diesel **Deere** 855M Gator is economical and has been a real workhorse around the farm. I use it for everything."

"My **Milwaukee** M18 cordless grease gun makes greasing machinery and vehicles a pleasure. I used to hate using a hand grease gun."

Tom didn't have a good experience with his **Deere** Z225 zero-turn mower. "It had an 18-hp. engine. I used it for light duty on a level lawn. With 225 hrs. on it, the compression release valve failed, and I had to replace the motor."

Glen Ray Goodson, Galax, Va.: Glen is pleased with the 2021 and 2022 **Toro** TimeMaster 30-in. cut, self-propelled push mowers he purchased for his mowing business. "These are excellent machines. Each one mows 30 different yards a week without breaking down."

Glen isn't happy with the **Wolverine** work shoes he bought in 2023. "The tread came off after 3 mos."

Henry Scheel, Marshfield, Wis.: Henry nominates his **Hamilton Beach** hand blender as a best buy. "It takes a lot of the work out of making tomato juice. There's no need to strain out seeds and skin."



Don Pence, Murrayville, Ill.: Don's impressed with the **Amulet** HoeClamp he purchased for his **Deere** 410 backhoe (www.amulet.com; ph 800-526-8538). "It'll pick up just about anything. It's better than a hydraulic one because you don't need a cylinder and hoses. It's better in dirt because it'll hold dirt in the bucket. I'm very pleased with it."

James Semsch, Wilton, Iowa: "Four years ago, at my wife's request, I bought her a 20-volt **Bauer** chain saw from **Harbor Freight**. I've all but abused this saw cutting seasonal firewood (elm, oak, and ash) to fit in our woodstove. I've had extra chains made for it. My daughters each have one as well. I'm happy with it."

Brian Anderson, Lidgerwood, N.D.: "My best purchase is a **Farmall** 544 hydro tractor. It's the perfect size for around the yard and in the field. It's perfect for mowing, blowing snow, grading the road, grinding feed, and drilling post holes."

"My worst buy is a **Dynahoe** tractor backhoe. Every part of it is junk. Nothing on it works right."

LeeRoy Lane, Ladysmith, Wis.: "My 2004 **Deere** LX277 lawnmower still runs great, although it does use a little oil."

"My 2020 **Deere** Z355R zero-turn has cut down my time on cutting by 40 percent. My wife loves it for going around her plants and yard ornaments, so now I don't have to do as much. So far, it's been trouble-free."

"My **Stihl** 029 chain saw was hard starting. I took it to three different dealers. It would start better for a while and then go right back to hard starting or no start. After several years of fighting, it went into the junk pile."



Devastator uses flat steel roller bars that knock over stalks and crimp them as the combine moves through the field.

Stalk Devastator Best Buy

Allen Meissner, M & P Farms, Bartlett, Texas, says the **Yetter** 5000 Stalk Devastator does an amazing job of demolishing corn stalks to the point where they disintegrate, and a person can't even tell where the rows are in a field. "It completely lives up to its name," Meissner says. "I'm glad we threw the old stalk stompers in the scrap pile."

The Devastator uses flat steel roller bars that knock over stalks and crimp them as the combine moves through the field. It breaks up stalks, which is completely different than a stomper-style attachment that just pushes the stalks over. Stalks behind the Devastator

don't damage equipment tires and tend to decompose faster because water and air can get into the stalks and help them disintegrate.

Illinois farmer Nate Young has similar comments about the Devastator on his combine. He says, "We tried stomper-style attachments and were completely disappointed. Then we switched to the 5000 Stalk Devastator and saw complete tire protection for all our equipment in the fields as well as much better stalk decomposition. When it came time to upgrade corn heads, we knew they would definitely be equipped with Devastators."

Charles Cummings, Bradford, Penn.: Charles gives top marks to his two **Toyota** Tacoma pickups. "Each one was very good. They were both 2004 4-WD models. One had 287,000 miles on it when a deer ran into the side. The other one has 175,000 miles. All they ever needed was gas, oil, and tires. I use my truck every day. I never have to add oil between oil changes. They get very good gas mileage."



Todd Lemke, Watkins, Minn.: Todd's 2022 **Wright** FM60 Fence Mower rates as his best buy (www.fencemower.com; ph 713-501-5356). "I do rotational grazing for my cow/calf pair operation and have many paddocks with wood/T-post high tensile fencing. Trimming under the fence took forever until I purchased this mower. It easily cuts grass, brush, and small trees under the fence while I ride on my JD 3010. It works best on even ground."

Todd hasn't been as happy with his **LockJawz** T-post insulators. "I was hoping these would be the answer for broken insulators. They're tough and hold onto the wire, but when hit by a deer or cow, they pop off the T-post or slide down, often pulling the insulators off the posts on either side as well. They do go back on, but I wish they held onto the post better."

Arthur Leid, Willard, Ohio: Arthur's the satisfied owner of a 2014 **Kubota** SVL90 skid loader with tracks. "It has lots of power, and with tracks, it can do grading of soil. It

lifts 3,000+ lbs. and can move equipment around."

Roger Kahler, Dunnell, Minn.: "I've put over 700 hrs. on my **Gravely** 260Z 60-in. zero-turn mower with no problems."

"**FARM SHOW** is a great publication. Keep it up."

Roger didn't have a good experience with his **EdenPURE** air purifier. "It worked for 35 days. The return cost \$20. I waited for almost 2 mos. and was then told they didn't have one to send. They did refund the original price."

Robert Hauschild, Pierz, Minn.: "My 2017 **Stihl** MSA 140 C cordless chain saw always starts. I use it for trimming and cutting down 10 to 12-in. trees. I'm still using the original battery. Excellent product."

Kenneth Leach, Wilton, Iowa: "I like my 2010 **New Holland** TC33D compact tractor with SuperSteer. I use it for mowing fence rows and grass lots."

"My 2013 **Deere** Gator with hydraulic dump box is used every day for something. I'm 83 years old and try to save every step I can. My wife likes it, too."

B.J. Gingerich, Tremont, Ill.: "I like the way the pieces of my **Milwaukee** Packout storage system interlock and stack. They seem very durable. The drawers are a nice feature. There's a large selection of sizes to choose from. It's expensive but worth the money."

B.J. hasn't had a positive experience with his **Milwaukee** Switch Tank backpack sprayer. "I use a lot of Milwaukee tools, but this is very disappointing. It leaked right out of the box, then completely quit working after 6 mos. I sent it to Milwaukee for repair, and they had it for 6 weeks. I finally got it back, and it's currently working. It's heavy and uncomfortable to wear on your back. When it works, it works well. It's a good idea but poorly engineered."

Kobi Stuckey, Hidalgo, Ill.: "My 2023 **DeWalt** DCB891 1/2-in. mid-range impact