

Sellers tend to rate their guns over-optimistically. I have purchased guns rated as excellent, that were actually only good to very good condition. Long distance airgun buyers should carefully interrogate the seller about the gun's condition. Should the seller be hesitant to answer pointed questions about the gun's condition, or come across as impatient or vague, the buyer should lose all interest in buying, and consider himself lucky in avoiding a bad deal.

Another important concern in long distance airgun buying and selling is packaging and insurance (against damage in transit). I can't overemphasize careful packing and adequate insurance. The longer and heavier the package, the more the packer must err on the side of overpackaging. A \$10 tip (beyond the agreed shipping charge) should insure double boxing on the seller's end.

In shipping hundreds of airguns through the years, I've only had two damaged. Both were long, heavy target rifles, also quite rare. Both cases became major U.P.S. claims nightmares, best avoided at all costs! One cost me nine months of frustrating aggravation to settle the claim. Bite me, U.P.S.!

I now ship long, heavy rifles only in airline approved, foam-padded hard rifle cases, boxed inside nondescript cardboard. Buyers of such rifles should pay the price to have the seller ship the gun in such a case, and consider the added expense as cheap insurance against receiving a destroyed rifle. Sellers should consider the added aggravation the only insurance against a nightmare like the one I experienced.

Aspiring airgun collectors are well advised to avoid suspicious or impatient sellers, act cautiously but quickly, insist on a return privilege, overpackage and insure well. Oh yeah, though experience is the best teacher, don't hesitate to learn from the mistakes of others (like me, for instance).

Happy collecting!