



KASCO Portable Sawmill

Just when you think you've seen all of the many portable sawmills on the market, another one comes to your attention. This happened to me last spring, but this time the situation was a little different from most because the sawmill was not new to the market.

I received a note from Mick Eckart of Worcester, Vermont, stating that he was operating a well-functioning portable sawmill that he wanted me to see. The mill turned out to be a Kasco, manufactured in Shelbyville, Indiana. Mick is a small-time building contractor, specializing in remodeling, and seems to have plenty of customers in line. But Mick finds time to occasionally run his little sawmill on weekends. As he ran the mill through a log for me, he explained that the mill is

actually about 10 years old and that he has had it for only a year. The mill appeared to be in good condition, especially considering its age. To keep it that way, Mick has built an open-sided shed for the mill and plans to expand the building soon.

Inquiring about the manufacturer, I learned that Kasco Manufacturing has been quite active in the portable sawmill industry since the mid-1980s. The company had its origin back in 1965 when Paul Kastner, an

SPECS

KASCO SAW Model II-B

Power16-hp or 23-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard engine
Max. log diameter30 in.
Max. log length16 ft.
FeedManualOptional electric power feed
Saw carriage4 post
Carriage track20 ft. standard; 1/2 x 4 x 4 angle can be extended
Price\$11,725 (manual feed)

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Indiana farm boy, began making a new agricultural machine in a chicken coop and barn on the family farm. At one point a few years ago sawmills were the company's main product line, but with the more recent proliferation of portable mill manufacturers, sawmills have since taken a back seat to a line of agricultural and landscaping machinery.

Mick Eckart's mill is designated the Saw II-B, one of three models made by the company. Although electric power feed for the saw carriage is available as an option for this model, Mick is perfectly content with having a manual feed model. As the saw passed easily through the spruce log, I noted something different from what I am accustomed to seeing with most of today's portable sawmills. The mill is designed for the operator to walk backwards as he pulls along the saw carriage. Mick explained that he likes it that way, as it enables him to have a better view of the saw in the cut.

Mick has made a few adjustments and personal improvements on the mill as would be expected with a 10-year-old mill. Mick installed better guide bearings and a toe roller which he can pull up with a hand winch. He didn't particularly like the original log-dogging system and built his own dogs, which he considers an improvement. But as Mick stated, these were minor adjustments, and he is



The mill is designed for the operator to walk backwards, as he pulls along the saw carriage.

quite pleased with the sawmill's performance.

Logs can be loaded from either side of the log deck. The standard track is 20 feet, but it can be

extended. The manufacturer refers to the heavy track as a two-rail design, providing positive stability. The saw in the four-post carriage raises and lowers by means of an electric motor, which appears to be much more convenient than setting by hand as is the case with many small mills. The current Kasco models are powered by either a 16-hp or a 23-hp Briggs and Stratton Vanguard engine.

Mick Eckart is quite satisfied with his sawmill and its performance. And the price of \$11,725 for a manual feed Saw II-B model is certainly quite reasonable for today's market. ■

Bill Gove is retired from a forestry career with private industry and with state government as a wood utilization specialist and lives in Williamstown, Vermont. He is a regular contributor and is the author of several books on the history of railroading and logging.



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