



Hud-Son Badger

FIREWOOD PROCESSOR

Firewood processors come in a variety of sizes, as would be expected in a market as active as the present one with its increased demand for firewood. But now Hud-Son Forest Equipment has produced a “pocket-size” model, a machine about as small as one could go and still accomplish the tasks of a firewood processor.

Logs do not have to be cut into shorter lengths before being pulled in by the cable (left). The blocks are cut while the log is still on the slope of the feed tray. To accommodate for this, the chain saw head is tipped at an angle to align with the log (above).

Hud-Son Forest Equipment likes to give unusual names to its line of portable sawmills and firewood processors, and this relatively new processor is designated the Badger. The small processor has found a market among some of the homeowners who cut their own firewood, especially in eastern New York, which is where I went to observe one of these machines in action.

Keith Bigelow of Willsboro, New York, purchased a Badger in early 2008 for the sole purpose of cutting firewood for himself and his brother, probably about 12 cords per year. He doesn't do any custom work with the machine, and at this point has no plans to move it off the location. However, for those who might want to operate a mobile processor, the

machine is very portable, mounted on a single axle and weighing only 3,000 pounds. The machine requires very little setup or take-down time, and tows easily, I am told.

To make such a reduction in size, one would expect that some of the standard processor operating conveniences would have to be eliminated. With that in mind, arrangements were made to view Keith Bigelow's Badger in operation. The machine was set up in his backyard, and despite the muddy conditions of late winter, Keith consented to run a few logs through.

Feeding

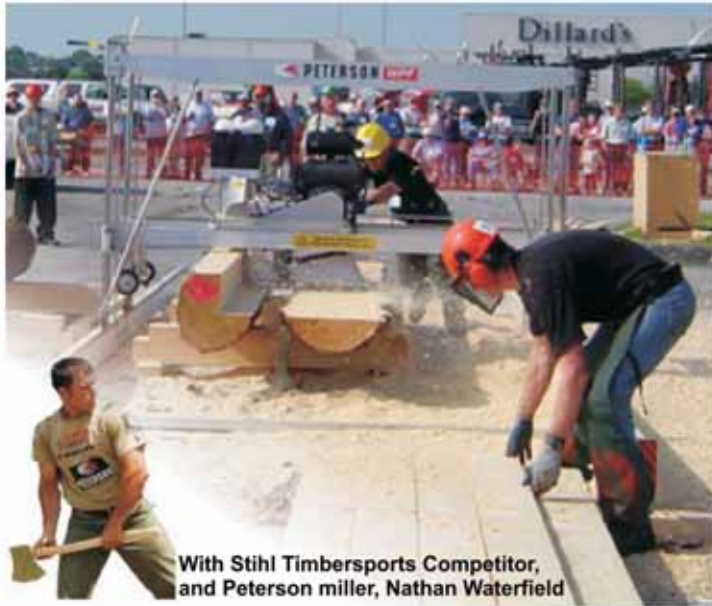
The first difference that I noticed was the absence of the usual elevated deck for feeding the logs through the cut-off saw. Instead,

the logs are dragged up to the machine by cable and then up a sloping 10-foot tray or trough to the location of the chain saw. The cable, powered by a hydraulic winch and fairlead mounted above the saw, continues to be used to advance the log as the blocks are cut off. This system of feeding the logs at ground level with a cable has some advantages for a homeowner; a yard machine to move and load the logs is not essential. The logs can be pulled directly over to the machine from the log pile. And with this type of feed there is no limit to the length of log that can be fed.

However, there is also a disadvantage. The logs have to be somewhat in line with the processor for the cable pull, and logs in a pile or off to the side will probably require some hefty human efforts with a

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peavey to get them lined up with the machine. Any mud or dirt on the site could be dragged along with the log as well.

Power

Power is supplied by a 16-hp Briggs and Stratton engine; with this model there is no choice of engines as there often is with other models. Although the log winch is powered by a 22-gallon-per-minute hydraulic pump, the chain saw is powered directly by a belt off the engine. The manufacturer points out that it considers the saw operation to be safer on this model when powered in this manner. The operator has the ability to stop the saw quickly by means of an electric switch. However, Keith was adamant in preferring to have hydraulic power for his personal use. Unless the log was quite crooked, it advanced easily enough through the saw by means of the same cable that had dragged it up the feed tray. Blocks up to 24 inches in length can be cut.

Performance

With a setup machine length of only 15 feet, the outfeed tray is

quite limited in length. But this presented no problem for Keith as he was able to let the wood drop right into the conveyer. The Badger's tow bar is removable, which allowed him to back the conveyer up against the front end of the processor. Keith had purchased a Hud-Son 16-foot belt conveyer (C16B) which reaches to a height of 8 feet.

Keith's production rate approximates that stated in the manufacturer's advertising brochure, up to one full cord per hour. Keith has done a full cord in an hour cutting 18-inch lengths with good-sized logs. The average, however, is a little over a half cord per hour.

With the price of firewood now rising sharply, the payback time for a backyard firewood processor such as the Badger could look attractive, especially with an eager brother to join in on the fun. ■

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.

SPECS

Hud-son Badger

Length.....	15 ft. set up
Weight.....	3,000 lbs.
Feed tray	10 ft. unfolded
Feed type	cable feed with hydraulic winch
Engine	Briggs & Stratton 16 hp with V-Twin electric start
Wedge	4-way
Hydraulic pump.....	22 gal./minute
Cylinder.....	4 in. x 24 in.
Saw chain.....	3/8
Coupler	2-in. ball
Manufacturer's stated cutting rate	up to 1 cord per hour, with up to 16-in.-diameter wood
Block length.....	up to 24 in. long
Price	\$13,900 plus freight
Conveyer	16B, 16 ft. \$4,570

For name of dealer, contact: Hud-Son Forest Equipment Inc.

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