

TIMBERWOLF PRO-HD

Can a firewood processor help out a busy logging contractor who moves large quantities of sawlogs and pulpwood? Firewood processors have found a place in the woods in recent years, primarily among part-time and full-time firewood producers. But how about a larger timber harvest operation?



PHOTOS BY BILL GOVE

Bret Lewis runs a log through his Timberwolf Processor.

Reviewed by Bill Gove

Visits to logging operations in the Adirondack Mountains of New York and to the Green Mountains of Vermont showed just how smoothly a firewood processor fits into the mix of getting the most value out of each harvested tree. Each of the operations was using a Timberwolf PRO-HD firewood processor, the largest of the processors made by the Rutland, Vermont company.

George Welden Logging out of West Chazy, NY is a diversified timber harvest company operating under contract with the Domtar Company on the extensive Domtar ownership in the northeast corner of the Adirondack Mountains. Welden moves large volumes of hardwood to quite a variety of markets. On the job the day I visited were

three grapple skidders, two loader slashers, a whole-tree chipper, and a Bobcat yard machine as well as company trucks and contract truckers. Sawlogs were cut out of the tree stem if the quality was there; otherwise the tree was cut into 8 foot long pulpwood. The trees were skidded out with tops still attached, and the tops were piled for later chipping into industrial fuel wood.

So, where does a firewood processor fit into the picture?

Set off in a location removed from the hustle of a busy log landing, George Welden fires up his Timberwolf processor as the work plan allows. He is able to do what many firewood producers wish they could do: Welden sorts his wood for the best market use, pulling out the large, rough logs as well as those

that are quite small and setting them over in a pulpwood pile. For the firewood processor, he sorts out the medium-sized logs that are reasonably straight. It makes for faster production when the processor is running—and for better looking firewood.

Welden said he is pleased with his Timberwolf machine. With only one man on the machine, producing 30 "face cords" of 16-inch firewood takes about 5 1/2 hours. A normal cord of firewood is 4 feet x 4 feet x 8 feet. A face cord is 4 feet high and 8 feet long, but is only the depth of the cut wood, which in Welden's case was 16 inches. It would take about three of those face cords to make a full cord, meaning Welden was getting about 2 cords an hour out of the Timberwolf.

Welden usually doesn't see logs longer than 20 feet, and the 16-foot feed trough for the saw worked well. However, a chain-feed trough system has its inherent difficulties. Sometimes the teeth on a chain-feed fail to catch crooked wood, and don't quite want to dig into frozen wood. George Welden said he did get frustrated with those occasional problems.

The guillotine style clamp used by Timberwolf appeared to be a little slower than other types of cutting clamps when first lowered down onto the log, but it held the wood tightly.

Processor manufacturers use a variety of designs for allowing the wood to drop from the cut-off chainsaw to a position in the splitting trough between the ram and the wedge. One of the design challenges is to have short sticks fall to rest in a

TIMBERWOLF SPECS

MODEL Timberwolf PRO-HD	HITCH 2 5/16-inch
POWER UNIT W/HP John Deere 80 HP Diesel	TROUGH LENGTH 16 feet
PUMP Triple, 33/20/13 gmp	FRAME Tubular
CYLINDER SIZE 5 x 24-inch, 3 1/2-inch shaft, 8-inch I-beam	AXLES 2
SPLITTING FORCE 20 tons	DECK 3-strand live, retractable
SPLITTER CYCLE TIME 6 seconds	HOURLY PRODUCTION 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 cords
CHAINSAW BAR 25 inch	MAX LOG DIAMETER 20 inches
CHAIN SIZE .404 inches	MAX LOG LENGTH 20 feet
HYDR. TANK CAPACITY 50 gallons	CLAMP STYLE Guillotine
WEDGES (STANDARD) 4&6-way w/hydr lift	OPERATOR'S SEAT Standard
MACHINE WEIGHT 8,450 lbs	SALES PRICE \$37,900
TRANSPORT LENGTH 24 feet	OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT 8-way wedge
TRANSPORT WIDTH 8 feet	SPECIAL FEATURES Retractable live deck Hydraulic wedge lift
TRANSPORT HEIGHT 12 feet, 6 inches	MANUFACTURER Timberwolf Mfg. Corp. 118 Spruce Street Rutland, VT 05701 (802) 775-4227
TIRES F7 8 x 14	



Bret Lewis stands at the controls. He is in safe location, note the protective viewing shield.

the movable wedge is raised. The multiple wedges are changed by unscrewing one nut and pulling a couple of pins, which only takes a few minutes. Welden said he seldom changes wedges, using the 4-way wedge almost entirely.

Customized Processor Serves B&J Wood

Over in the steeper terrain of the Green Mountains, the B&J Wood Corporation of Stafford, VT was harvesting a hardwood sale on National Forest land in Granville, VT. With a crew of three people and one skidder, owner Bret Lewis logs out 25 to 30 thousand board feet of sawlogs and 25 cords of pulpwood weekly, plus his cut of 600 to 700 cords of firewood a year. Like George Welden, Lewis also is able to sort out the large, rough logs for pulpwood instead of firewood or sawlogs.

Lewis said he chose a Timberwolf PRO-HD because he likes that the manufacturer is close by

and offers fast service on needed parts. This same advantage has been voiced by other operators regarding various manufacturers, and, in all fairness, most processor manufacturers I have talked to go the extra mile for their customers, including quick delivery of parts even over long distances.

Bret Lewis had only run his processor for a few months when I visited, but it seemed to fit well into his logging system. During the summer months he takes the machine into the woods and sets aside an area at the job site for part-time firewood production. Since the machine must be taken in over woods roads, he hauls it with one of his larger firewood trucks. Because the hitch is under the truck dump body, Lewis had to have his processor customized by the manufacturer with an extended draw bar and pin-tle hitch instead of the standard ball hitch.

Another change Timberwolf made for Lewis was lengthening the splitting

position properly lined up before the wedge. Timberwolf uses a slide tray. The wood slides down a sloping surface as soon as the saw cuts it free.

Welden prefers the slide tray over a straight drop tray, which some manufacturers use. He feels the wood drops into place a little better. Another advantage of a slide tray is that the operator is able to flip the piece of wood end for

end as it slides down. Sometimes uneven or sloping ends of a stick may not split well if left facing the wedge, and being able to flip the stick helps.

The Timberwolf PRO-HD has a standard 4-way and 6-way removable wedge, with an 8-way wedge available as an option. The wedge is raised and lowered hydraulically, and the post serves as a stationary 2-way wedge when

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chamber. Lewis' largest customer (about 150 cords a year) is a commercial greenhouse which uses 2-foot wood for its heating system. The 8 x 8-inch I beam was extended, as well as the cylinder on the back of the push block.

I was interested in how the splitting chamber would handle the centering of 2-foot wood in front of the splitting wedge, and noticed that Lewis had to frequently reach in to straighten the piece after it had been cut by the saw and dropped down. With a two-man crew operating the processor there was little time lost, but the second man was kept busy straightening wood. There appeared to be a need for a little design

improvement on this splitting trough, which I understand the company has made recently. The custom-length trough Lewis ordered looked to make the problem a bit worse. It was a pretty tight fit in the chamber with 2-foot wood. On all the standard machines now, Timberwolf reports they are changing the drop angle into the trough, which they hope further speeds things up.

An operator's seat is standard with this model, but Lewis removed it in order to give himself more mobility.

Lewis said Timberwolf gladly made other changes for him when he ordered his machine. The feed trough chain was strengthened by putting a bridging



The Timberwolf, set up for the winter months near Bret Lewis' home.

between each set of teeth to prevent bending. The double gear connector between the hydraulic chainsaw and the saw's motor, used to absorb shock and slack, was strengthened with a chain coupler. Many of these improvements have now become standard

on Timberwolf's new machines. Timberwolf is diligent about customer needs and making design improvements.

Lewis' machine has the standard three-strand live deck with 5 feet between rails; which is certainly sufficient, except for one time

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MANUFACTURER'S COMMENTS

Any way you cut it, speed is the name of the game in the firewood business and Timberwolf firewood processors are built for greater speed and profits.

These lean and mean machines give a single operator the ability to produce 1 1/2 to 3 full cords per hour, converting your low-grade hardwood into cash. Load the live deck with log length wood, and produce firewood from the safety of the operator's station. The hydraulic chainsaw makes short work of even the hardest wood and the multiple splitting heads produce firewood the size you want.

Built in Vermont by craftsmen, all Timberwolf equipment is built with high-performance American-made hydraulic components. Powered by Kubota or John Deere diesels, or available as a PTO-powered unit, these machines are backed by Timberwolf's comprehensive warranty and top-notch customer service.

Timberwolf firewood processing equipment is the choice of firewood producers, arborists, municipalities, and farmers all over North America.

when he tried to feed some extra-long crooked pieces without cutting them in half with a chainsaw first. Time was lost jockeying them into the feed trough. The log deck on the Timberwolf PRO-HD is easily retractable, using a small winch

mounted on the frame to raise it to an upright position for moving.

During the winter months Lewis sets the processor up in a roadside location near his home, and brings sorted wood home at the end of a day in the woods. The processor is

then operated on weekends as a family operation. Lewis said he gets production of about two cords an hour with two men.

The machine ran very smoothly the day I visited, powered by a standard 80 HP John Deere diesel. An Isuzu diesel is an option.

B&J Wood Corporation uses two wood trucks for delivery, a 2-cord and a 3-cord capacity, and sells only green wood. After Lewis serves his greenhouse customer, the remainder of his 600 to 700 cords each year are sold to homeowners during the summer months. Winter-cut wood has to go to his premium customer, the greenhouse. If a domestic customer only wants one cord, Lewis

charges him an extra delivery charge.

After visiting these two logging operations, it was obvious that there is a slot for a firewood processor in the timber harvesting scheme of a larger operation. But to be successful, it takes careful planning, scheduling and a smooth-running, heavy-duty processor. The Timberwolf PRO-HD is just such a heavy-duty processor, and it is well-suited to the heavier demands of a busy logging operator. Timberwolf also makes a smaller model as well as one with a PTO option. ■

Bill Gove is a retired forester who last worked for the Vermont Department of Parks and Forests.

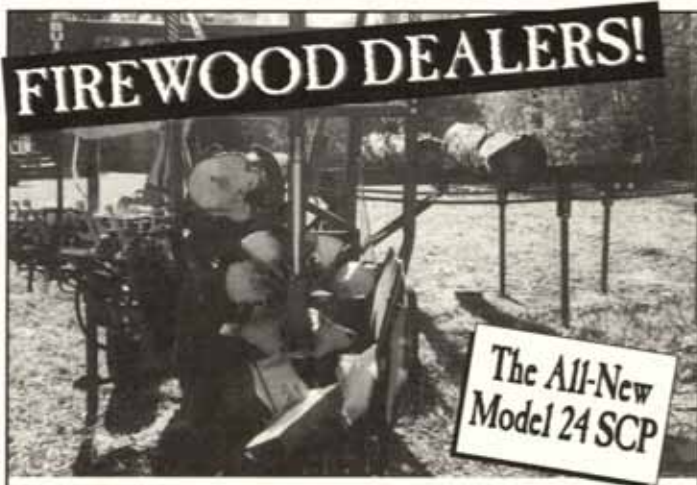
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