

# Timberwolf PRO-MX

Combined with the innovative "top roll," this processor is central to a smooth, effective firewood operation.

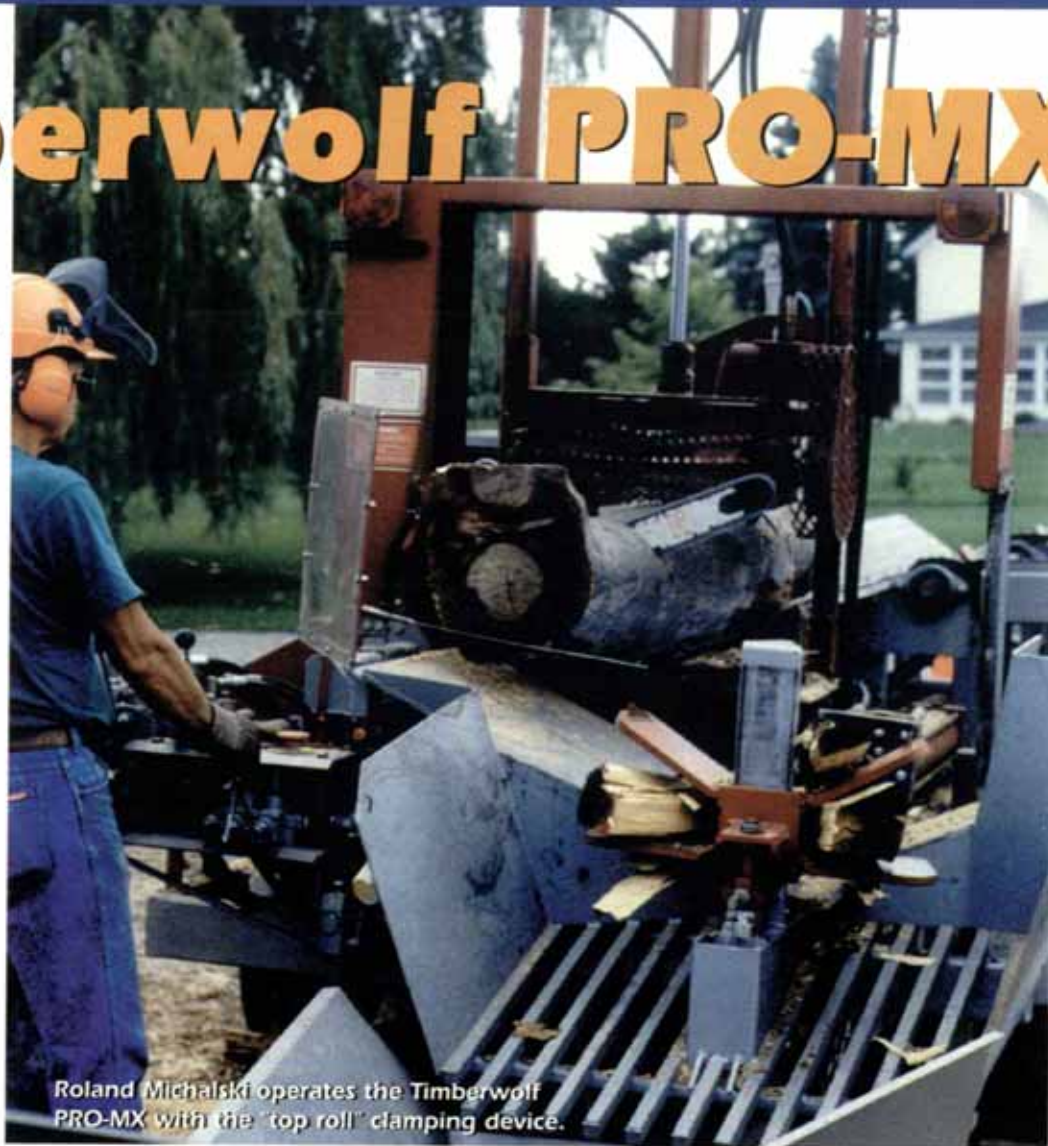
By Bill Gove

There is one vital function of the firewood processor that has produced a variety of designs, a function that has sometimes separated the men from the boys.

Every processor, regardless of make, has to incorporate a means to move the long length of firewood forward to be cut. Different schemes have been used—chain feed, overhead grapple, sliding pressure plate—and some of them work quite well. Cost has been a determining factor in the extent of the design sophistication.

Manufacturers are always making improvements, and I recently had the opportunity to view one of the better schemes yet devised for advancing logs under the cut-off saw. It's known as the "top roll."

The idea was first applied and patented by Jeff Weeks, a manufacturer of wood splitters and processors in a shop in Belchertown, Mass. Weeks



Roland Michalski operates the Timberwolf PRO-MX with the "top roll" clamping device.

PHOTOS BY BILL GOVE

developed the Valley line of firewood processors. I reviewed two of the Valley models in the Dec./Jan. 1998 issue of IS&WM.

The Valley line of processors, however, has recently been bought by Timberwolf Manufacturing and combined into their extensive line of wood splitting equipment. Timberwolf purchased Valley in part to obtain the rights to use the "top roll" system.

Timberwolf has now made the top roll available as an option on new

machines as well as for retrofitting older models. I chose to visit an operator in western New York who had a fairly new Timberwolf PRO-MX with the top roll. I've reviewed Timberwolf's larger PRO-HD model (IS&WM, April/May 1998), so this visit gave me an opportunity to check out the smaller PRO-MX model.

Owner Roland Michalski lives in Lima, N.Y., an agricultural area that supports some logging and firewood operations. Roland, who used to operate heavy con-

struction equipment, now raises a few beef cattle on his farm, and is in the process of slowly building up a dealership of Timberwolf wood splitting equipment. With the equipment in hand, he operates a part-time firewood enterprise.

The Timberwolf PRO-MX is a smaller machine than the PRO-HD model, designed for part-time producers who might want easier portability. Roland's processor is equipped with a 16-foot trough and with a three-strand, 7 and 1/2 foot



With the operator controls near the splitting trough, it's easy to position logs.

live deck for the logs. With the deck fully loaded, he operated alone for about 45 minutes before he had to load more logs.

As he began working, the top roll feed system riveted me. The top roll, I noticed, is located directly over the feed trough roll and a short distance behind the chain saw when viewing it from the operator's

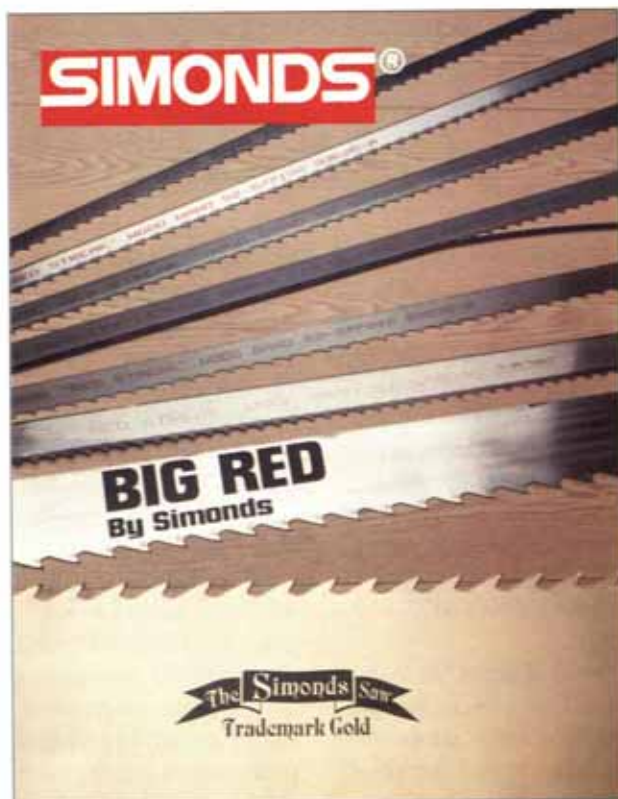
position. The log feed trough is still equipped with a feed chain, of course, because the log in the trough must be advanced enough for the pair of rolls to grip it and roll it forward.

Both of the rolls are powered, and, though operating on the same valve, they have separate drive

*(Continued on page 31)*

## TIMBERWOLF SPEC SHEET

<b>MODEL</b> Timberwolf PRO-MX	<b>TIRES</b> F 78 x 14
<b>POWER UNIT W/HP</b> Kubota 45 HP Diesel	<b>HITCH</b> 2 inches
<b>PUMP - GPM</b> Double 22-22	<b>TROUGH LENGTH</b> 16 feet
<b>CYLINDER SIZE</b> 4 x 24, 2-inch shaft	<b>FRAME</b> Tubular
<b>SPLITTING FORCE</b> 20 tons	<b>AXLES</b> Two
<b>SPLITTER CYCLE TIME</b> 10 seconds	<b>DECK</b> Three strand, live, retractable
<b>CHAIN SAW BAR</b> 25 inches	<b>EST. PRODUCTION RATE</b> 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 cords/hour
<b>CHAIN SIZE</b> .404	<b>MAX. LOG DIAMETER</b> 20 inches
<b>HYDRAULIC TANK CAP.</b> 40 gallons	<b>MAX. LOG LENGTH</b> 20 feet
<b>WEDGES</b> Four-way and six-way	<b>OPTIONS</b> Top roll, eight-way wedge, hydraulic oil cooler
<b>MACHINE WEIGHT</b> 5,780 pounds, plus 200 for top roll	<b>SALES PRICE</b> \$32,300, \$2,100 for top roll
<b>TRANSPORT LENGTH</b> 24 feet	<b>MANUFACTURER</b> Timberwolf Manufacturing Corp. 118 Spruce St. Rutland, VT 05701 Tel.: 802-775-4227 Fax: 802-773-1275
<b>TRANSPORT WIDTH</b> 7 feet	
<b>TRANSPORT HEIGHT</b> 12 feet, 6 inches	



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(Continued from page 8)  
chains. But it's the top roll that is the effective member of the pair and that makes the operation work smoothly. The top roll normally runs in a float position, meaning that there is no downward pressure exerted other than the weight of the roll, and this is generally sufficient to move the log along the trough. The roll easily moves up and over large knots and other irregularities in the log surface.

If the log is crooked and resists advancing or if the log surface is icy, the operator only has to increase downward roll pressure. All of Roland's logs moved through easily, and I noticed that when he came to make the last cut, which is sometimes a more difficult one because of the short length of the remaining log, the increased pressure on the roll held the piece firmly for the chain saw.

Firewood processor users have different preferences when it comes to the style of splitting troughs. Some prefer to have the wood drop straight down into the trough; others prefer the sloped tray under the saw to slide the piece over to an offset splitting tray.

From my observations, I think that the slide tray, used on the Timberwolf as well as other brands, requires the least amount of hand adjustment of pieces by the operator. Almost all of Roland's cuts dropped properly in place in front of the ram; the slide tray even allowed him to flip them end for end as they slid down. A nice feature of the PRO-MX

model was the easy access to the splitting trough; with the controls nearby, Roland easily repositioned a large split section for resplitting. Working alone, he operated on about a 10-second cycle time. "It's sort of challenging to try to beat the splitter cycle," Roland said, shouting. "That's the fun part of running a processor."

It appeared that one recent improvement on the Timberwolf was a narrowing of the beam or space in the splitting trough between the sloped plates that guide the wood down to a position before the splitting ram. The blocks usually fell into place easily.

The splitting wedge also has a slightly improved design to keep the split pieces from spreading out too far sideways. The wedge is now longer, has less taper, and is swept forward on the top to discourage the block from riding upwards. The wings tend to push the wood inward while splitting, which increases safety and reduces wear on the trough plates.

### MANUFACTURER'S COMMENTS

Timberwolf Manufacturing Corporation knows that speed is the name of the game in the firewood business, and our machines are built with the speed and reliability to help you convert your low-grade hardwood into cash.

The best firewood processor value on the market is the Timberwolf TW PRO-MX. This well-engineered, fully hydraulic machine is powered by a Kubota 45 HP Diesel power plant and has a dual 22 - 22 gallon per minute pump.

The optional patented Top Roll Clamping system increases production by eliminating the need to raise and lower the clamp with each cycle.

The machine is truly multi-function, meaning that several operations can be performed simultaneously, increasing cordwood production two to three full cords per hour. The hydraulically powered 25-foot bar and .404 chain rip through the hardest of wood with reliability and ease.

The 4-by-24 foot price tie rod splitter cylinder generates 20 tons of splitting force, pushing wood through the 4- and 6-way wedges, both standard equipment on the TW PRO MX. This workhorse features a dual strand roller chain live deck and a 16-foot feed trough. The frame is built from rugged tubular steel and features three axles with electric brakes, DOT approved brake, turning and marker lights, 7-ton leveling jacks on all four corners, and several hitch options.

I also noticed that the Timberwolf is now equipped with a chip separator between the splitter and the conveyor. Roland spoke highly of the addition.

The standard power unit for the PRO-MX model is a 45 hp Kubota diesel. The engine is equipped with a turbo that boosts the air pressure for combustion and, according to Roland, increases the power to 60 hp. The engine also has a Murphy switch that holds the relay closed in place until the

engine starts, and the alternator takes over. The hydraulic hoses were all firmly held in place by neoprene brackets.

The PRO-MX model is the smaller of the two basic Timberwolf models, about 1 and 1/2 tons lighter than the PRO-HD model. As such, the PRO-MX might not be the machine of choice for an operator who wants to make firewood production a major activity. I don't believe the smaller model would stand up as well as its heavier brother.

The PRO-M model is



Roland Michalski loads logs onto the Timberwolf PRO-MX.

the same as the PRO-MX except that the log trough is 12 feet long instead of 16 feet and the log deck has only two strands, spaced eight feet apart.

A year or so ago, I visited a firewood producer in southern Vermont who was using the PRO-M model and pushing it hard every day. After a year of steady use, the strain began to take its toll, and the day I was there the idle sprocket on the log trough chain froze up. He also said he was having a problem balancing a fork full of logs on the narrower deck and keeping a long log from tipping off of the 12-foot trough if the butt was at the rear of the trough. I recently heard he was considering swapping for



The top roll makes it easier to handle crooked logs.

Timberwolf's larger PRO-HD model. I wouldn't recommend the PRO-M model for a producer cutting material long in length in rapid production.

There are, however, many part-time firewood producers that need a lighter machine such as the

PRO-MX with its easier portability. Roland Michalski can make his processor ready for the road in about 10 minutes. The 7 and 1/2-foot live log deck swings up in the air, pulled up by a small hand crank installed on the machine, and sticks 13 feet up in the

air for transport.

Roland's production rate when operating alone is four face cords (1 and 1/3 cords) in two hours, including the loading of the deck and other miscellaneous chores. The face cord measurement seems to be popular in western New York. Firewood prices are attractive at \$120 per full cord for green wood and \$180 for dry wood.

The powered top roll is an effective innovation in the field of firewood processors. I would expect to see a growth in its popularity and application. ■

*Bill Gove is a retired forester who last worked for the Vermont Department of Parks and Forests and is a frequent contributor to Sawmill & Woodlot magazine.*

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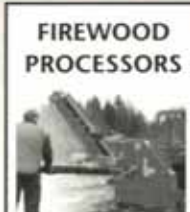
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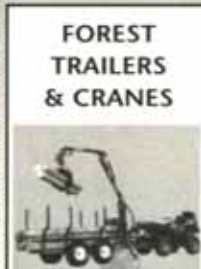


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