



Machine Operator
Tim Batey

Log Handler
Shawn Bencze

Time
13 min.

Cords Processed
1.5

Cords/Hour
6.7

Blockbuster 22-22

BLOCKBUSTER PRESIDENT Tim Batey and shop foreman Shawn Bencze pulled their flagship product onto the Firewood Competition field. The 5-ton 22-22 firewood processor (22-inch diameter, 22-foot-length capacity) sidled up alongside a semi-truck trailer and lowered the 30-foot conveyer so that the split wood would flow into it. “It gave us a chance to show people how easy it is to move,” said Tim.

A third-generation lumberman from southeastern Iowa, Tim described a little of the history of the firewood processor. “This is the machine we started out building 22 years ago. That first one is still working,” he noted. The 83 Kubota turbocharged diesel engine was the most powerful on any of the firewood processors, and should put to rest any doubts as to whether a chain-saw-type cutoff saw is up to the task of cutting firewood on a commercial machine. As with its other models—and in fact, nearly all firewood

processors that used a chain saw cut-off—the slasher is a heavy 0.404 pitch bar and chain often found on mechanized harvesting systems, designed for more power and more abuse than the biggest handheld chain saws can dish out.

An air compressor is standard on this machine to provide a pneumatic assist on the splitting ram, giving a 4.5 second cycle time. “Besides, it comes in handy for airing up tires

“Nothing moves on this machine, unless the operator has a hand on the controls.” –Tim Batey

and blowing sawdust out of the machine,” Tim added. “We oversized the air tank for that reason.”

Seated inside the optional cab, Tim was prepared for rain, though on this day, he had opened the door and window to take advantage of the

pleasant afternoon temperatures. The saw was thoughtfully designed to throw the sawdust away from the operator so he has a good view of the process. The controls are automated, but still require operator input. “Nothing moves on this machine, unless the operator has a hand on the controls,” explained Tim. You can stop any function at any time. “For example, if you release the control lever during the cutoff process, the saw automatically retracts and stops on its own. That’s for safety.” For his part, Shawn manned the skidsteer and made sure that there was a steady supply of logs on the three-strand live deck.

Tim was confident enough in the machine’s 25-ton hydraulic ram to select an 8-way splitting wedge (the only contestant to do so). It did not disappoint

him. Every piece of wood fed through without any misfeeds or jams. The only timeout he needed was when the trailer overflowed with firewood, blocking the outfeed of the conveyer.

The last piece of wood dropped onto the conveyer just 13 minutes from the time he

started the engine to begin cutting—scarcely time to warm up the engine or the 44-gallon hydraulic reservoir—giving high credibility to the published claim of an output of four full cords per hour. Tim looked pleased and relaxed when he emerged from the cab—just another day at the office. ■





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