

PROCESSOR



Hud-Son Badger

Machine Operator
Dave Hollenbeck

Log Handler
Eric Hertel

Time
51 min. 18 sec.

Cords Processed
1.5

Cords/Hour
1.8

ALBERT EINSTEIN once said, “Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.” The engineers at Hud-Son Forest Equipment applied this philosophy to their Badger firewood processor. Hud-Son general manager Dave Hollenbeck took the controls of the machine, while Eric Hertel, who does a little bit of everything—from quality control to trade shows—did his best to winch in a constant supply of logs.

At 2,250 pounds, the Badger was the lightest of the firewood processors in the competition. The 16-hp Briggs and Stratton engine was the smallest power plant on any firewood processor—even smaller than many of the firewood splitters. According to Dave, the Badger is designed to be

towed out in the woods with a four-wheeler, and has no need for support equipment, as long as there are logs within the reach of its winch cable. “There is no practical length limit on the logs,” explained Dave. “In fact, the longer the log, the less time you spend setting the choker cable and winching.” he added.

While the other firewood processor operators were using forklifts and grapples to load their elevated log decks, the Hud-Son team simply laid out their logs in a neat row on the ground where the Badger’s hydraulic winch could pull them up a trough ramp to the cutoff saw. According to Dave, “If you can winch a log onto the deck, you can make firewood out of it.”

The log length gauge is another example of simplicity. When the log

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advances far enough to touch a chain dangling from a bracket, the operator stops the winch feed and activates the clamp to hold the log in place for cutting. The cutoff saw consists of a conventional 50-gauge chain saw bar and a regular 3/8-inch pitch chain. Power for the 25-inch bar comes through a belt drive coupled to an electric clutch that stops the chain when it is not in use. The manual saw feed mechanism uses the "armstrong" system—with Dave lifting the mechanical lever to lower the blade through the wood for each cut. Releasing the lever, a counterweight and simple gravity lift the bar out of the way.

Another mechanical linkage allowed Dave to set the height of the 2/4-way wedge to match the diameter of the wood with a lever attached to the frame. From there, it is a matter of holding one hydraulic

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—Dave Hollenbeck

lever forward to put the ram's 20 tons of force behind the wood. The splitter is capable of handling

firewood lengths of up to 24 inches with a 12-second cycle time.

Running the winch, chain saw cutoff, and the hydraulic ram one at a time kept the engine running full throttle most of the time. According to Dave, "The machine performed flawlessly." In the 51 minutes, 18 seconds, there were no time-outs. Eric got plenty of exercise setting the choker chains, hooking up the winch line and pulling the logs up the chute. As Eric commented, "Maybe we could have had a skinnier guy loading the logs. I was sweating like a pig." According to Eric, "The Badgers we sell are mostly for people who are cutting 50 to 100 cords per year for themselves and a few buddies." But don't count on Eric coming over to cut wood, no matter how good a buddy you are. "I do enough of that for my job," he concluded. ■



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