



Sustainable Harvesting

Gustafson Logging — making themselves as productive as possible

We're a family-owned business," says Mark Gustafson, co-owner of Gustafson Logging. "We've been operating for about 34 years now in Northwest Oregon's Coast Range, primarily for commercially owned timberlands.

"Our business philosophy is to make ourselves as productive as possible while outputting quality logs and

timber products — the kind the people we work for want to see on a regular basis. And to maximize production on a sustainable, regular basis, you've got to keep up the quality of your work. That means not only producing logs, but taking care of the environment. Doing all the things that are required, not only by regulation, but by simply being a good steward of the ground so we can

prepare the way for future harvests."

Gustafson continues, "We're working on private ground, so there are stipulations the timber companies must follow as they try to be as 'green' or as sustainable as possible." They have all become Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) certified. Places like The Home Depot® will buy lumber only from timber companies that are SFI certified. In other words, they're not over-cutting their stock, and they're not razing the land in any cut-and-run manner. They're in it for the long haul.

Working with Constraints

"Consequently, loggers on the property must work within the constraints of that certification. We have to be certified as professional loggers. To do that, we must take a certain amount of classroom instruction on an annual basis through



Co-owner, Clay Gustafson, says a stable crew is essential. The company feels fortunate to have a number of long-term employees. You may have seen them featured on the History Channel series "The Ax Men."

seminars and meetings put on by either the State Department of Forestry or the Association of Oregon Loggers."

He says it's important to keep up to date with new changes and regulations ranging from road construction to harvest practices. "Today's timber companies aren't going to hire somebody who's not good at what they do," he says. "And a logging company's not going to stay in business unless they're good at what the timber companies want done on their property — so they can stay in compliance ... and therefore be able to sell their lumber."

Productive Machinery

In order to be as productive as possible, Gustafson Logging has been relying on Hitachi forestry equipment for the past 10 years.

"Ten years ago, we decided that there were certain pieces of equipment that you could run for an extended amount of time," explains Gustafson. "Our yarders, for example, are a long-term investment. Log loaders and stroke delimiters are critical as they need to be running all the time. If they stop, the meter keeps ticking as long as the crew is on the job. And if they stop, production stops. So, we trade every 7,000 hours. Interestingly, our productivity has increased 15 percent, and our maintenance costs have decreased 40 percent, so the practice has dramatically

improved our bottom line. You hear about others who might boast of having 20,000 hours on a log loader, but with our common radio setup, you hear talk about breaking down."

Clay Gustafson, Mark's brother and co-owner, says that with LinkBelt, they were introduced to the Isuzu engine, but then moved to the Deere 2554 Log Loader. "We were, and still are, quite impressed with that loader built by DHSP, but we missed the Isuzu engine," he says. "We think it has the best fuel economy and lowest maintenance costs. Moving on to the Hitachi provided the best of all worlds. It's a DHSP product with an Isuzu engine."

Another reason Gustafson likes the DHSP product is the dealer — Papé Machinery. "The financing options available through them and John Deere Credit are excellent. It's a strong dealership with great product support," says Clay. "They don't walk on water, but they are excellent."

Super stars

Machinery may be important, but with a great crew, it's just iron. For that reason, the Gustafsons feel fortunate to have a number of long-term employees.

You may have already seen the crew in action. The company and crew were featured on the History Channel series "The Ax Men." **TW**



The Gustafsons feel they serve their customers best and make more profit by replacing their log loaders and delimiters every 7,000 hours. Jobs with 30-degree-plus slopes are cut by hand. The timber is then brought to a landing with cable yarders.

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