



TimberPro TL735 Feller Buncher with Tracks Simplifies Cutting for Georgia Logger

Dabdoub wanted a TimberPro feller buncher on tracks; now he has one.

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MOULTRIE, Georgia — Cutting trees in a cypress-gum swamp is a tricky business. But it just got a lot easier for David Dabdoub, who owns Eastern Forest Resources with his brother, Anthony Dabdoub.

The force behind the change at Eastern Forest Resources (EFR) is a TimberPro TL735 feller buncher. The TimberPro TL735 rides on tracks and the cab is set high. Both features simplify the approach David and his crew use in the swamp where smaller trees are notched as the TimberPro moves in. Once felled, smaller trees serve as the road. Larger trees are then cut, slashed and arranged at a 45-degree angle along the road in piles of three to five, depending on size. Lengths and road are picked up in the retreat from the tract.

Gum, or sweet gum, trees are valuable members of the witch-hazel family. Grain (as interesting as walnut) makes the wood a favorite for furniture and finishes. Strength (with weight of 37 pounds per square foot) accounts for gum being tapped for crates and pallets.

The crew with the new TimberPro 735 cuts for American Southern Forest Products, a company that is owned by Anthony, and David. Eastern Forest Resources supplies most of the wood to American Southern Forest Products, a manufacturer of pallets for the industrial market.

EFR runs two crews. “The other crew works for Oakcrest Lumber Co. in Buena Vista, Georgia, David Pitman forester” and

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it relies on a Timbco for felling, David explained. "Right now we're working for Plum Creek, Gordon Moss forester. I work through Oakcrest and they contract for Plum Creek." EFR also cuts for Wells Timber, through Oakcrest Lumber.

David switches back and forth between the two felling machines. "Every day, I cut for both crews," he said. The man behind the machines, Pat Crawford, and the design of the machines earned David's trust early on. "I've always had Timbcos," said David. The 2003 Timbco at EFR is David's sixth. "I probably have 40,000 hours operating Timbcos." That machine has a Koring 20-inch fixed saw head.

The new TimberPro TL735, which had 110 hours on it when we spoke to David in January, has a 2004 Koring (now Waratah) head with a wrist, or has nine inches of travel to the left and to the right with dual cylinders. David explained he did not know how he would like the modest movement in the head, but he adjusted quickly and it suits his method.

David long wanted a TimberPro on tracks. "I waited until Pat started building track machines," he said.

"The TimberPro, I'm really happy with it," said David. "I used to go to Atlanta [wood industry] shows and I met [Pat] and his wife." The opportunity to get to know the person, Pat, behind the machine gave David even greater confidence in a machine that he had long known in the form of Timbco, the entity Pat sold while retaining the rubber component with the option to return to tracks after a waiting period of years.

At the same time, David kept abreast of changes at TimberPro. "They made improvements while doing rubber" tire machines, he said. David was literally waiting for the time when TimberPro could put its machine on tracks.

"I have to have wide pads to work in the swamp," said David. The TimberPro has them. But that is just one great feature.

"The new TimberPro has reversible fans" on the radiator

and oil cooler, said David. "You clean it out once a day when you start your shift." Time not spent cleaning debris out of the machine is time that can be spent cutting.

David said he particularly likes the IQAN-MDL implement control system in the TimberPro. It is easy to use and adds to productivity.

"The electric over hydraulic" arrangement, said David, allows the machine to multifunction, such as in move and grasp, which also boosts the rate of production for EFR. "The track speed is unbelievable." It is difficult, explained David, for him to start talking about the technical features of the TimberPro TL735 without getting carried away because he could not be more pleased with the machine.

David purchased his TimberPro TL735 at Knight Forestry, Whigham, Ga. He could not be happier, he said, that Knight Forestry recently joined the roster of TimberPro dealers because he often purchases equipment there. TimberPro is headquartered in Shawano, Wis.

The two 295 Barko Magnum machines at EFR came from Knight Forestry. Besides selling equipment from Barko Hydraulics, LLC, Knight sells Cummins, CSI, Rotobec, Pitts Trailers and Jonsered.

"I split [the team] into two crews because the tracts were getting so small," said David. "Each crew has a 525C Cat skidder and a 295 Barko. We've got one limber – chain saw – on each. We're all using Jonsered."

"Each crew does between eight and nine loads per day," said David. "The perfect scenario is [nine] loads per day," so that trucks are kept going in an optimum way. EFR relies on its own trucking company to move logs. "We bought all new Kenworth [tractors] in 2008, white and blue," said David. To make a match, TimberPro fitted EFR with a blue and white TimberPro TL735 feller buncher with a blue saw.

Eight-inch to 11-inch logs go to Anthony's mill, which sells its industrial pallets to bottlers and others. Eleven and one-half inches and up goes to Oakcrest's lumber mill and flooring company. Pulpwood goes to paper mills.

Hardwood predominates on all tracts in the form of gum, poplar, bay, cypress and oak. "The only time we cut pine is when it's mixed in," said David.

When EFR gets into mountainous terrain, it encounters mostly oak, poplar and hickory. In the swamps, bay and gum dominate. The carrier Pat designed could not be better suited to the diverse topography that must be traversed by EFR. "It's just such a versatile machine," said David. "You can use it in mountains, in the swamp, on hills."

EFR has a full-time forester, Jason Presley, on staff. And all members of the team are certified through the Georgia Master Timber Harvester program.

"We can work year around because it's sandy" swamp substrate, or solid if moist, explained David. "Up north, when we have a real bad rain, we have to stop."

Moultrie, Ga., the seat of Colquitt County is home to EFR. The town of 15,000 residents is located in the southwestern part of the state. EFR generally works within a 110-mile radius of its home base.

David was still logging in the Golden State when Timbco caught his eye. David had already decided he wanted to move to the Peach Tree State. A California state forester showed David a Timbco ad in a magazine. When David got his first machine in 1991, part of the relocation to Georgia, and confirmed the attributes were as promised in the ad, he stayed with the brand. Two big reasons were "because of the way the cab levels, and the balance of the machine," he explained.

The year 1991 was a turning point in several ways. "We've been in Georgia since 1991," said David. "We started logging in

California in 1976.” When David was just 17 years old he and Anthony, who is three years older, launched a firewood business in Santa Cruz, or what is familiar today as part of the Silicon Valley area. “It got cold there in winter,” he explained.

“We were logging in redwood at the time,” said David. The brothers had a contract with Big Creek Lumber. “It was a very lucrative contract for harvesting hardwood before redwood was taken out.” The brothers took out established hardwood and also built roads ahead of the 30 percent selective cuts of redwoods, explained David.

David and Anthony used a CAT D5H dozer to harvest trees. “The rules there were very strict,” said David. “You’d see a state forester twice a week. Rules would easily fill 40 pages and include every culvert.”

At first, firewood was split with a traditional ax and maul. Then the brothers bought a wood splitter and finally a wood processor. They were making 2,000 cords per year. When they got the opportunity to harvest 250,000 board feet per year of redwood (board feet is a California permitting standard), things were going very well.

“Then California started to take land out of production,” said David. That led to diminishing acreage that could be logged in any way. So by 1990, the brothers began thinking about moving to Georgia, where Anthony had been born and their mother then lived. “I was born in California. My dad worked for an airline and moved [the family] to California.”

Today, firewood again is part of David’s family. David’s sons do firewood as a sideline business using a Timberwolf 4-way splitter and plan to study business and forestry next year at a university.

David is happy with the professional choice he made while still a junior in high school. “I don’t like crowds,” he said. “I like being in the woods.” In his free time, travel and family are on tap. “I like taking trips to Cancun and Vegas,” he said. “We go to the

lake, boating and water skiing.

“I have been married to my wife LeeAnn for 13 years. We have four children, Craig 18, Heath 18, Alexandra 11, and Taylor 10.”

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