



Jeff Coleman, Forestry and Fencing (JCFF), Bedfordshire

Jeff Coleman Forestry and Fencing (JCFF) is a well-established Bedfordshire forestry business processing 2,000 tonnes of roundwood to woodfuel each year.

Jeff was introduced to Woodfuel East as local partnerships sought new ways to bring many of the county's neglected woodlands, back into active management.

Jeff recognised that many of the woodlands were too overgrown or dense to be tackled using conventional equipment. Woodfuel East were able to help him with a grant towards investment into the ideal tools for the trade.

“More woodland owners should consider managing their land as the demand for wood fuel is rising - along with the price for roundwood. We can get wood out of the most difficult areas and pay land owners for the timber as well.”

Jeff Coleman
JCFF



Jeff Coleman Forestry and Fencing, has harvested timber from local woodlands for more than 20 years which is then seasoned, cut and sold locally. People who burn logs bought from Jeff are supporting the local environment as his woodfuel is all grown within a ten-mile radius of his central Bedfordshire business.

The timber is generated through JCFF's environmental management work, where trees are thinned to allow more light into the woodland. This centuries-old tradition, which utilises harvested wood used for fuel, had fallen into neglect resulting in an abundance of large trees whose shade prevents regeneration.

Woodfuel East, the former Bedfordshire County Council, landowners and charities were seeking to bring these woodlands back into active management and improve biodiversity – but they faced a problem.

Conventional forestry equipment is too large to operate in tightly-packed, overgrown woodland. It cannot cope with non standard-sized trees and its

heavy weight can damage the woodlands' sensitive environment.

This is just the sort of challenge Jeff enjoys and he soon identified an Eager Beaver Thinning harvester as an ideal piece of equipment for the job. Once identified, Woodfuel East were able to help him with a grant towards the purchase of a second-hand model.

Jeff explained: *"This harvester, designed to work in overgrown woodlands, can be driven directly to the woodland. It's small enough to get into tight spaces and can harvest trees of up to 14 inches in diameter whatever their shape. Trees are cut at their base, trimmed and then cut into roundwood."*

"We can get into areas which other harvesters can't reach, without damaging the woodland floor."

Jeff has been so pleased with the harvester which has delivered a three fold increase in output, that he is applying for a grant for a second piece of equipment to extract timber.

Technical information

The Eager Beaver Thinning Harvester (made around 15 years ago) is one of three designed and made by Marshall Agricultural Engineering of East Sussex. It weighs just eight tonnes and, as most four wheel drive harvesters start at 14 tonnes and can be more than 20 tonnes, means Jeff has been able to use it in conditions which are unfavourable to heavier vehicles - resulting in higher output.

The size of tree which can be handled is up to 14 inches in diameter. With a tilting crane it can reach behind standing trees and operate on uneven ground. The crane's location (over front axles) also provides good stability. (Some harvesters have roof-mounted cranes which can create instability.)

The harvester trims bark and branches from the roundwood, which improves seasoning and the tree can be cut to specific lengths in situ.

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