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Equipment combo battles beetle



A TimberPro/Risley Rolly chipper equipment combo is working well in beetle wood for Alberta logging contractor Triple G Construction, with the Rolly offering the added flexibility of also being a processing head.

By Tony Kryzanowski

The approach being taken by the Alberta and BC governments to manage the mountain pine beetle is fueling a number of innovative ideas to control the destructive insect. It can be a challenge, especially in situations where access to infested trees is sometimes poor and trees are scattered over a large area. In many instances, the infestation requires a mechanical control method.

Triple G Construction Inc owner and logging contractor Gervin Antypowich has adopted the beetle control solution offered by Grande Prairie-based equipment manufacturer, Risley Equipment. The company's Rolly processor has been modified to function as a felling attachment and chipper.

Dave Hewings, Risley Equipment senior designer for attachments, says the Rolly processor is suited for this type of modification because its design has always been modular. The company

simply took a chipper that it had available, laid it on its side and equipped it with the proper connector so that it would fit on the standard mount that was already part of the Rolly design. “We left our existing roll arm groups and limbing arms in place,” says Hewings, “and put our smaller standard style pinion rotate on it.”

The chipper cuts and controls the tree much like a cut-and-catch hot saw, where the operator pushes the hot saw through the tree, catching and controlling it with the attachment arms as it comes off the stump. And by tilting the attachment during the chipping process, the chips are broadcast in the cutblock similar to how a snowblower blows snow. The Rolly chipper can handle up to an 18-inch tree.

The Triple G Construction attachment is mounted on a TimberPro 630, six-wheel drive, rubber-wheeled carrier, equipped with Eco-Tracks for better flotation, improved traction, and reduced environmental damage.

Antypowich says he discovered what Risley had to offer while attending the Northern Alberta Forestry Show in 2007 in Grande Prairie, and decided to give both the TimberPro carrier and modified Rolly head a try for beetle control. “I guess somebody had to get their feet wet,” says Antypowich. “We decided to jump in.” He adds that the mobility of his carrier versus a stand-alone chipper and the versatility of the Rolly chipper were important selling points. “The unique thing about the Rolly chipper for us is that we can turn it back into a processing head and use it in other areas,” he says.

The US-built TimberPro carrier is a relatively new arrival on the logging market. When Pat Crawford sold his Timbco line of forestry equipment to Partek in 2000, he retained the option to buy back the rubber-wheeled equipment branch of the equipment line, which he did in 2002. While his initial focus was on forwarders, redevelopment soon progressed to feller bunchers and harvesters, with the first one sold in 2002.

“The trouble with all the wheeled equipment that’s on the market today is that it can only handle the smaller Scandinavian-type heads,” says Crawford. “For a lot of the conditions that we’ve got in this part of the world, you need a heavier duty, more robust type of head. We tried to perfect this piece of equipment to handle the bigger heads.”

The cab on the TimberPro carrier rotates 360 degrees, giving the operator the ability to harvest timber on all sides of the unit. The cab also has zero tail swing so that the unit can be operated in more environmentally sensitive and confined areas.

A 6.7B Cummins 250 horsepower electronic engine comes standard on the 630 TimberPro, or an optional Cummins 8.3C 300 horsepower electronic engine. Antypowich opted for the higher horsepower engine because of the additional torque and faster recovery it provides to the Rolly chipper. The carrier fuel tank holds 100 gallons.



A rubber-tired 630 TimberPro carrier equipped with a Rolly chipper gives Alberta’s Triple G Construction the mobility and productivity it needs to tackle mountain pine beetle control contract work.

The TimberPro engine comes equipped with an auto reversing, hydraulically controlled radiator fan. The transmission is a hydrostatic two-speed transmission, capable of reaching up to 12 miles per hour. The undercarriage consists of a heavy duty bogie axle with dual lock cylinders for the oscillating rear axle.

Among the options are a 22-inch leveling front frame and a six-foot squirt boom at the end of the standard harvester boom. When equipped with the squirt boom, it can reach up to 31 feet, one inch. TimberPro also offers heavier feller buncher booms for operating heavier attachments.

The cab's gullwing completely shields the engine compartment from the hydraulics to prevent fires, and the engine exhaust is also insulated to prevent fires and to reduce noise.

The Risley Rolly processor is one example of a processing head that works well with the TimberPro. Risley is a Canadian distributor of the TimberPro equipment line.

The Rolly beetle wood chipper was put to work by Triple G Construction in an almost inaccessible swampy area 17 kilometres from a transportation corridor, showing just how hard it is to access some pockets of beetle wood.

Employees transported fuel and themselves to the chipper using all terrain vehicles. The beetle control program, managed by a partnership of five counties and funded by the provincial government, operated from February 1 to March 31, but was mainly in high gear for about three weeks in March. It was handled on a quarter-section-by-quarter-section basis, with a forest technologist walking each quarter to flag infected trees and set out trails.



Triple G's Gervin Antypowich says that the versatility of the Rolly chipper was an important selling point. "The unique thing about the Rolly chipper for us is that we can turn it back into a processing head and use it in other areas," he says.

While other contractors are using different beetle control methods, Antypowich believes he has the most efficient system for the specific conditions around Grande Prairie. He says the TimberPro carrier and Rolly chipper can effectively access infected wood scattered over a large area and

can chip it right at the stump.

Triple G Construction has purchased a second Rolly chipper, which it has attached to an older Tigercat 860 carrier. Hewings says although the Tigercat delivers only about 240 horsepower, the Rolly chipper is still working effectively. However, with less torque, the operator needs to control the tree a bit better as it is being chipped.

"One of the advantages of the Rolly install group is that we have proportional buttons on the feed rolls," he says. "The operator can slow the feed rolls down or speed them up as they are working." He says there has been quite a lot of interest shown among BC and Alberta contractors in this chipping system because of its mobility and because it represents a safer working environment. "It's considerably safer when you are working amongst dead trees to have a protective cab around you," Hewings concludes.

