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## Deere's new 848H skidders climb better

When Oler Bros Contracting and Strandquist Bros Contracting merged, they combined what they thought were some of the better units from the Strandquist fleet with the Oler fleet, and sold the rest. The owners feel the merger could allow them to defer major

equipment expenses for up to another five years, during a time when preserving capital is probably a good idea.

However, prior to the merger, Oler Bros Contracting did invest in three new John Deere 848H skidders.

With chains on the wheels and its longer wheel base, Ken Oler says this skidder climbs better than what they had before, giving the company the ability to retrieve trees in up to 50 per cent slopes and deliver them to roadside for processing. About 90 per cent of the company's delivered wood is cut-to-length.

The model 848 is the largest "H" series skidder offered by John Deere and has an improved power-to-weight ratio of 5.6 per cent over the 848G. It comes equipped with a PowerTech Plus 6068H, Tier III, 6.8 litre (415 cubic inch) engine with a gross peak horsepower of 167 kW (224 horsepower). It weighs in at 17,842 kilograms (39,300 pounds).

These new skidders replace three John Deere 848 skidders. Oler describes the 848 models as a bit of a hybrid and the best effort that Timberjack and John Deere could put together at the time when Timberjack had just been bought out by John Deere. He believes the 848H is a much better skidder, and that it will work well in this challenging mountainous terrain.

"There is nothing at all similar between the two skidders," says Oler. "It's a totally different machine. It has the long wheel base, the more environmentally friendly Tier III engine, and the beefier SWEDA II axles. The transmission is also totally John Deere, and it has a different cab."

Among the new features on this skidder is the lock-up torque converter, which is only available on the 848H. It stays engaged between gearshifts, resulting in a smooth, steady shift, leading to improved fuel efficiency and potentially better production. The transmission comes with six forward and three reverse gears. The new dual-mode steering option also allows the operator to alternate between standard steering and the quick-steer mode with the flip of a switch.





