



Ponsse's Star Shines Bright

Ponsse celebrates 40th Anniversary and the Ergo 8w

By Kenneth Boness

Launched in 1970 by inventor and entrepreneur, Einari Vidgren, Ponsse Oyj, based in Vierema, Finland, has been a leader in forestry equipment for decades.

Festivities have been held at all Ponsse facilities around the world from Finland to Uruguay, from Brazil to Hong Kong. August 13, 2010, was the date of a major observance at the factory in Finland. Two weeks later, Ponsse turned its attention to its North American Headquarters at Rhinelander, Wis.

Showcased before 400-450 attendees, were Ponsse's Beaver, Ergo, and Fox harvesters, as well as Buffalo forwarders and clam-bunk skidder. All of those units work exceptionally well in Great Lakes' forests. When the topography becomes steeper than what Midwest "flatlanders" are accustomed to, Ponsse provides the Ergo 8w.

Ergo 8w for Steep Slopes

At the heart of an Ergo 8w is a Mercedes-Benz OM906LA engine generating 275 hp and 811 lb ft of torque at 1200 - 1500 rpm. Sending its power through a hydrostatic-mechanical power transmission, differentials, planetary gears, and 600-34 or 700-34 front or 600-26.5 or 710-26.5 rear tires, the fuel-efficient diesel delivers a tractive force of 40,465 lbf. But that is only part of the plan for steep slope operation.

Operators in adverse terrain would be wise to choose the "with loaded bogies" option. That feature provides down-pressure on the leading axle when entering a steep climb whether that climb is over a stump, windfall, or mountain slope. On a normal machine, the weight falls on the rear axle of a tandem arrangement, and the front axle is of little benefit. Ponsse provides a system whereby the front axle continues to pull.

"The Ergo 8w, outfitted with loaded bogies, went places I didn't think a mechanical processor could get to," said logger Ted Benson. "There was one two-foot or better spruce that stands out in my mind because it was on an excessively steep slope. The stump was higher than the cab when I cut it, leaving a hinge until it was down and only then bringing it downslope. And behind me came a Ponsse forwarder that went everywhere I did and loaded on those slopes."

Little Known Fact

Ponsse may be known for tough machines, including the Ergo 8w, but here's a fact. The original "Ponsse" was named after the most well-known dog in the village of Vierema when Einari began constructing forestry equipment. Having built nearly seven thousand machines over a forty-year span . . . that's something to celebrate.

(On a much sadder note, Einari Vidgrén, passed away at the young age of 67, on October 26, 2010. He will be deeply missed.)