



## Finding the Formula

**Gulbranson Logging, one of the largest logging contractors in B.C., has found a successful equipment formula that includes Waratah processing heads and Hitachi carriers.**

The Gulbranson family has endured and even relished the hardships of an outdoor type of life since 1966. They seem to thrive on the extremes of the British Columbia Interior—arctic-cold winter, powerful summer thunderstorms, and the economic uncertainties of the logging and ranching industries.

“We originally came to the Vanderhoof area to farm and ranch,” says Mel Gulbranson, president of Gulbranson Logging, Ltd. “But after our first long winter, my father quickly discovered the need to generate cash flow during those cold months. So, the entire family set about learning the practice of clearing land and logging. We started falling for another contractor, but finally decided we’d rather do our own thing, and started our company.”

Forty-five years later, the Gulbranson family operation is now one of the largest logging contractors in the British Columbia Interior and one of the largest in the province, averaging 500,000 to 700,000 cubic metres annually.

With four operations (two with their own camps), the company continues to aggressively pursue opportunities in B.C. forests districts from Burns Lake to Dawson Creek.

The company uses a harvesting program of feller bunchers, grapple skidders to move logs to the roadside, dangle-head processors, and butt-n-top loaders for loading trucks.

“I’m sold on the dangle-head processors,” notes Gulbranson. “They work better with a wider variety of log sizes, and they’re especially quick with the smaller logs. There are multiple brands, but we are prone to go with the Waratah.”

And they’ve had local customers. “We’ve been very fortunate,” says Gulbranson. “We hauled our first load of logs into L&M Lumber’s yard in 1969. We’ve worked extremely hard to earn their loyalty, and as a result they’ve been very loyal to us—we’ve become their prime contractor.”

Loyalty permeates the entire Gulbranson Logging Ltd. operations. “We’ve worked to be very loyal to our employees and everyone we do business with,” says Gulbranson.

“We also work to buy our equipment from the dealer and dealer salesman who seem most interested in building a loyal, long-term relationship. This is especially true with the excavators we buy. Over the years, we’ve owned all of the top brands like Hitachi. What we’re most interested in is a man and a dealership who stand behind what they sell. Our salesman and our Hitachi dealer, Wajax Industries, have done a good job of providing that loyalty and support.”

After some difficult years for the industry, things seem to be looking up and Gulbranson is positive about the future.

“We’re excited about the good the Canadian government has done in helping open the market to China,” he says. “Many of the economics of our industry have already dramatically changed for the better. Sales of Canadian logs and milled products to Asia—especially China—have replaced sales to the depressed housing market in the U.S.



“Secondly, we’re all excited about the new technology now in place to help the mills make use of the timber devastated by the mountain pine beetle. It’s no fun looking at these dead forests. The sooner they’re cleared, the wood is put to good use, and then the forests replanted, the more positive the industry will be.”

This story originally appeared in the Hitachi company magazine, Breakout.