



## Ponsse's efficient Ergo

**Ponsse's Ergo harvester looks to be a good fit with the small, medium and beetle killed trees in B.C.'s Central Interior.**

*By Jim Stirling*

The Ponsse Ergo worked the block with a cool efficiency. It removed the wood from the stump, processed it and positioned it for the forwarder in smooth and steady cycles.

The Ergo is Ponsse's latest entrant in its line of log harvesting equipment to be introduced to central British Columbia.

It's designed ideally for working with wood up to 25 inches in diameter, which the customized Ponsse H7 harvesting head can dispatch in a single cut. The basic machine is compact, weighing about 17,000 kilograms.

The machine's size--and power--makes the Ergo a good fit with the region's preponderance of small, medium size and mountain pine beetle killed trees. The power--about 275 HP of it --is delivered by a Mercedes-Benz diesel engine and coupled with double circuit hydraulics. One pump supports the crane movements with the other dedicated to harvester head operations.

The new harvester's name is a contraction of "ergonomics".

Ponsse says the machine's front axle suspension system helps keep the operator's cab upright. Also, the machine's low centre of gravity reduces the operator discomfort that can occur when the machine sways from side to side during the harvesting operation.

The Ergo's in-cab information system provides a wide variety of at-a-glance intelligence. This includes information concerning tree species, sorts and quality levels along with real time monitoring of harvesting results.

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Marko Mattila was among the interested parties recently watching the Ergo go through its paces at the logging show in the Salmon River drainage, northeast of Prince George. Mattila is president and CEO of Ponsse North America Inc., based in Wisconsin. He says Ponsse is taking a relatively low key approach to introducing the machine into the B.C. marketplace.

"We think the machine will sell itself," explains Mattila. "We try to answer any questions contractors have about it honestly." In the meantime, Mattila is working on shoring up Ponsse's machine support system. The Ponsse dealer in the region is Woodland Equipment Inc., in Prince George.

Gregory Jacob also had more than a passing interest in the Ponsse Ergo at work. The machine was working on one of his logging sides and an ideal one for the Ergo, with level terrain and most of the trees averaging .3 cubic metres in volume.



While the Ergo harvested its way along one side of the block, a Ponsse Bear harvester patrolled the other. It was a good forum and opportunity to assess the Ergo's merits and performance. Jacob, president of Lo-Bar Log Transport Co. Ltd. in Prince George, has first-hand knowledge of the benefits the larger Bear harvester offers. He acquired the Bear along with a Ponsse Elephant forwarder after an equipment demo in the Prince George area during the summer of 2008.

"I think the Ergo could be a fit for anyone contemplating a smaller harvester," he observes. "It can produce the required cubic metres per hour." A further factor in the Ergo's favour is its fuel consumption.

The Ponsse line of forestry equipment is manufactured in Finland, and Europe has had to learn how to accommodate far higher fuel prices than North America.

Consequently, fuel economy is a priority in keeping machine operating costs manageable. "I've found my fuel costs are about 40 per cent per cubic metre less than a conventional logging system," says Jacob. A conventional roadside logging system includes a feller buncher and grapple skidder machine combination compared with a harvester and forwarder.

"We try to find all the efficiencies we can pick up. I'm of the opinion that this is an efficiency," he adds.

Jacob says Lo-Bar has invested heavily in equipment for the cut to length log harvesting system. He adds that reflects his licencee--Canfor Corp's-- commitment to the harvesting method.

Lo-Bar logging crews have kept busy during the economic downturn and Jacob has been successful in adding volume through timber cutting rights in government bids and acquisitions from companies exiting the business.

Lo-Bar now has about 30 pieces of logging equipment and operates a fleet of 14 logging trucks, reports Jacob. "It's not all doom and gloom out there," he asserts. "These times have provided the opportunity to get the house cleaned out and get ready for whatever comes next."