



Chopsticks Firewood, Cambridgeshire

The growing demand for firewood is providing business opportunities for a rural Cambridgeshire company. Jason Cooper, who set up RJC Earthworks in 1998, diversified into wood fuel production in 2005 and has created a successful woodfuel business near the Fenland village where he grew up.

Thanks to support from Woodfuel East, Jason is helping to meet the increasing demand in the East of England for well-seasoned logs.

“The demand for locally produced wood provides an opportunity for landowners to generate an additional income and bring their woods back into management for fuel production.”

Jason Cooper
Chopsticks Firewood



When Jason set up RJC Earthworks in 1998, active woodland management was in many cases not financially viable and if woodland management did take place low grade timber was usually regarded as worthless and left to rot. Then demand for firewood began to rise, so he decided to diversify and expand, setting up Chopsticks Firewood in 2005. Wood has since doubled in price and demand from customers has continued to increase.

Processing wood without high volume specialist equipment is a laborious process and Jason couldn't keep up with demand. So, with help from a 40% grant from Woodfuel East, Jason invested in a Binderberger SSP 520 firewood processor. The operator can load individual lengths of up to 5 metres into the processor which are then automatically cut, split and loaded into crate with a conveyor belt.

As well as being economical to run, this mobile machine takes less than 20 minutes to set up. This has given Jason the opportunity to offer a mobile service and process firewood for suppliers elsewhere in the region.

This was particularly beneficial during the hard winter of 2010/11 when many firewood suppliers exhausted their supplies early in the season. With his Binderberger, Jason was able to provide additional processing capacity to help other suppliers process enough roundwood to meet the demand for logs.

“Buying a processor like this is a big outlay and most suppliers will only be using it for a short period each year. Hiring mine to increase processing capacity makes good business sense,” said Jason.

Chopsticks produces logs from well-seasoned, local wood. To ensure that customers know what they are getting, the moisture content of Jason's firewood is highlighted on the company website at www.chopsticks-firewood.co.uk

Jason added: *“Too many customers are being sold logs which are still green and too wet, or are from wood with a poor burn quality. They soon learn that a good wood with a low moisture content, like ours, means a good fire!”*

Technical information

The Binderberger B520 is one of the highest capacity mobile firewood processors with a 30t splitting force. It can process roundwood, up to a diameter of 52cm, into 20 – 55cm logs.

The machine can run through six cycles a minute, based on processing 52cm diameter hard wood.

Woodfuel East is supported under the Rural Development Programme for England by Defra and the EU with additional support from the Forestry Commission.