

IFA Top Five Timber Harvesting Tips

Don't be hasty to sell your timber. Take the time to collect and analyse as much information as you can. As far as trees are concerned there is usually no rush to make a quick decision, so don't be pressured into doing so. Know what you are selling, bid it out to determine the market value, and negotiate a contract that protects your interests.

1. Harvesting Plan

A timber-harvesting plan should provide a clear understanding of what will be harvested, the estimated volumes and thus the value of the harvest. Marking the trees you want to sell or retain would seem like an obvious step in selling timber. Surprisingly, many sales occur without marking or a clear understanding of which trees will be cut.

Never be pressured into making quick harvesting decisions, remember from a tree's perspective, there is usually no rush to make a quick decision. Only after a careful review and analysis of your forest can you make sustainable decisions about managing or selling your trees.

2. Knowledge of Timber Markets - Get Professional Advice

A professional forester can be your biggest ally in determining timber value, unless you are familiar with timber prices, timber assortments, harvesting costs, access issues and local competition for timber, it is difficult to estimate the value of your standing timber. Getting independent advice can increase sale income by marking and marketing your trees, as well as improve the overall productivity of the forest.

3. Competitive Bidding

It very important when selling timber that you talk to a number of buyers to get a true representation of the value of your thinnings. Taking the time to find the right buyer can pay dividends. Knowing the value of what you are selling, and offering it through a competitive bidding process will often secure the best price.

4. Harvesting Contract

A harvesting contract is one of the most important elements leading to a successful and profitable timber sale. The contract should describe who, what, where, when, how, and for how long relating to your forest. The contract does not have to be long or technical, merely thorough and accurate.

The buyer's responsibilities are more involved and include: payment schedule, excessive residual stand damage penalties, repair to existing fences damaged during the harvest, bridges, culverts, or roads. A certain amount of residual stand damage is to be expected during the harvest but trained and responsible harvesting contractors will take care to minimise such damage. The contract should name the seller, the buyer, the location of the sale, how much is sold, and the length of the agreement.

5. Reimbursement for Excessive Timber Damage

Your contract with the buyer should clearly state penalties for excessive damage to standing residual trees and other property. It is often a good idea to require a performance deposit to ensure that contract terms and requirements are met.