wood-terms

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608-238-6001 [TEL]

greg@globalmicroturbine.com [Email]

Global Energy LLC

Wood Terms for Dry Kilns by Global Container Kiln

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The Most Commonly used wood terms for Lumber and Firewood.

PDF Version of the webpage (first pages)

Wood Terms for Dry Kilns

Glossary of Wood Terms

Backhaul

A delivery by tractor-trailer originates from where the trailer is loaded, the load is delivered to a destination, then the trucker returns home. If the return is also a paying load to be delivered to the vicinity of the trucker's home, that load is called a backhaul. If the trucker returns home empty, that run is called a "deadhead."

Band sawmill

An evolution in sawmill technology that uses a thinner band saw blade (less kerf therefore less sawdust waste) than a circular saw. It also has teeth on both sides that allows cuts to be made in two directions instead of just one, improving efficiency and productivity.

Bark

The outer protective layer of the tree. Severely damaged bark on a tree is a defect that can lower the value of the its logs. At the sawmill, logs are first debarked, then slabs are cut off leaving a rectangular or square cant to be cut into lumber. There are two main types of debarkers: Rosserhead and Ring debarkers. Before raw bark is sold as bark mulch, it is ground in a tub grinder (hammermill) to give it the proper texture and consistency. Bark quality is a function of color.

Board foot

An volume of lumber that measures 1″ x 12″ x 12″. The number of board feet in a log is estimated using one of three log scales: Scribner, Doyle, or International Rule. The standard used in Massachusetts is the International Rule. The actual yield of a log after sawn into lumber is often greater than the estimated yield. Both logs and lumber are sold by the thousand board feet or MBF.

Bole wood

The lower section of the trunk of a tree from the ground to the first limb or branch. Some loggers and whole tree operations delimb trees leaving only the bole or stem portion of the tree. If chipped in a whole tree chipper, the result a "cleaner" chip with fewer leaves, sticks, or pine needles.

Cant

A log is first debarked then the rounded slab or outside portion of the log is cut off by the sawyer. The remaining square or rectangular portion of the log is called a cant. Lumber is cut from the cant. The more pieces of lumber cut, the more sawdust (waste byproduct) is produced, reducing the log yield of marktable board feet.

Carriage

The sawmill device on which a debarked logged is placed which moves the log back and forth through the saw blade creating slabs, cants and lumber. The log is also turned on the carriage before making the next cut.

Circular sawmill

The traditional sawmill that uses a circular saw (large version of hand held power saw). Circular saws are thicker (larger kerf) than band saws and produce more sawdust. Logs can be cut moving on the carriage in only one direction, then the carriage returns and turns the the log for the next cut.

Co-Gen Operation

Refers to the simultaneous production of steam and electricity.

Construction and demolition (C&D)

Though lumped together to refer to wood waste produced by construction or by demolition, the products can be quite different. Construction wood waste can be clean dimensionally cut lumber such as board ends or cutoffs. Demolition wood waste is often contaminated with nails, sheetrock, paint, etc. Markets for C&D are limited by how "clean" and free of contaminants the wood is. Some business specialize in processing and disposing of C&D.

Cord

Stacks of hardwood 4′ high by 4′ wide by 8′ long. It is the measure by which firewood is customarily sold , sawdust is sometimes sold, and small diameter logs sometimes bought. One cord is the equivalent of 128 cubic feet, 4.7 cubic yards. The weight of a cord varies if it is green (freshly cut), seasoned (partially air dried), or dry.

Cut to length (CTL)

New timber harvesting equipment allows loggers to fell trees, delimb them, and cut them to market length specifications before loading them on forwarders bound for the landing. CTL equipment is a recent trend in logging operations.

DBH (Diameter breast height)

The diameter of a tree at breast height (4.5 feet above ground) together with the estimated height of the usable logs in a tree is used to determine the volume of lumber likely to be yielded in a log depending on the log scale used (Scribner, Doyle or International Rule).

Doyle Log Rule

In use since about 1870, this scaling method deducts a full four inches for slabs. It grossly underestimates the yield on small diameter logs (less than 14″) . Every fourth Doyle load could be considered free in comparison to International rule, if the logs are within 14 to 20″ inches in diameter and the prices per MBF for both scales were identical. The variance between Doyle rule and other rules is based on diameters, rather than lengths. (Also see Scribner and International Rule.)

Flatbed trailer

Used to haul lumber. Flatbed operators may haul logs if they carry portable stakes. The number of stakes, stake height and distance between stakes determines the number of log tiers and length of logs in each tier a flatbed may carry. Flatbed operators will carry sawlogs before they will carry pulp logs, because the higher value of sawlogs ensures they are more likely to receive an acceptable rate. Lower-value pulp logs may require quibbling over nickels and dimes in the rate.