

# Timber truck - a new concept for log forwarding

*“Very impressive,” is how Lars Rosewarne describes the new Bell T403E Timber Truck he recently purchased from CablePrice (NZ) Ltd for his Whangarei-based forestry harvesting operation, Rosewarne Contracting.*

Since early March, the firm has been putting the Timber Truck through its paces in challenging, sandy conditions in the Opotu Forest, New Zealand where it is exceeding expectations, he says.

“The productivity of the truck is extremely high. This is the first full-length machine we’ve had, which has made a real difference. It can take two bays of different sized logs, with gives us flexibility and allows us to carry 30 tonnes of logs with every load. The low emission 6-cylinder, turbo-charged Mercedes engine has plenty of power, which you need when you’re moving up to 500 or 600 tonnes of logs a day.”

In anticipation of operating on the sand, Rosewarne Contracting fitted the Timber Truck with large flotation tyres, which are already providing good protection for the roads. “The combination of the flotation tyres and correct axle spacing is working out really well. We’re not punching the roads out, like we did with our older machines when we didn’t have the axle spacing quite right. The flotation tyres are making it a lot easier to work on the sand, and will allow us to work through the winter without destroying the roads. This was a major reason we bought the Bell Timber Truck – to work on sand, and allow us to do away with our skidders at Opotu.”

The Bell T403E’s low rate of fuel consumption has been an added bonus, says Lars. “We’re only filling it up about once every four days, which we didn’t expect. It’s going really well.”

Operating the new Bell is 75 year-old Dale Right, who is more than happy with the machine. “It’s comfortable to drive, with a decent sized cab, a good seat and air conditioning. It also has very good lights, which are important when the forest is closing in around you. The reversing camera is good too.”

Rosewarne Contracting runs a highly professional forestry contracting



operation and is contracted to some of the largest forest owners in the upper North Island, such as Rayonier and Hancock Forest Management.

The firm has been dealing with CablePrice (NZ) Ltd, which imports and distributes Bell Equipment in New Zealand, for around 10 years, during which time Lars has brought a number of different brands and models of machinery.

He decided to invest in the new Bell T403E after being particularly “stoked” with the performance of the last of his three previous Bell machines, which had 15 000 hours on the clock. “The great experience I’ve had with the Bell brand and CablePrice made the decision easy.”

Phil McKenzie, Equipment Sales Specialist at CablePrice, believes the concept of using a Timber Truck

rather than traditional log forwarding methods could “well catch on” in the New Zealand forestry sector.

“Cost per tonne with a Timber Truck can be significantly less than other systems. This is all down to its productivity, given it can carry more timber than a forwarder and has faster ground speed. The Timber Truck certainly refines the concept of log forwarding in certain applications.”

Other features of the Bell T403E include rear and front chassis with belly plates, which protects the transmission unit at the front of the truck. Raised prop shafts ensure optimal ground clearance during operation and protect against machine damage.

The operator cab is a ROPS/FOPS unit to protect against driver fatigue with new-technology Xenon lights

allowing the machine to be operated in darker parts of the forest without compromising safety.

Lars says he values the relationship his company has with CablePrice, which dates back more than a decade. “We have got to know them well and built good relationships. Their salespeople are really good, and CablePrice delivers the right machines for the job, when you need them. They also put a lot of effort into delivering good after-sales support and service.”

Although it’s early days, Lars couldn’t be happier with the new Bell T403E. “It’s doing the job, drives well, has excellent productivity and fuel efficiency, and does everything we want it to do. We’re really happy with it.”