

Is Firewood The Best Fuel Choice?

WESTMINSTER, Md. — As winter kicks into high gear, the cost of keeping warm increases. And this year's escalating energy prices have many homeowners reevaluating their fuel options. Among the possibilities: firewood.

"Wood is a renewable resource that when used with modern catalytic stoves can be an environmentally sound and cost-effective source of home heat," says Jonathan Kays, a Natural Resources Specialist with Maryland Cooperative Extension, part of the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. However, the cost-effectiveness of firewood depends on several factors.

The heating value of any fuel is measured in British thermal units (Btu); one Btu is the amount of energy required to raise a pound of water one

degree Fahrenheit. Different types of heaters burn fuel at different efficiencies. For example, the average airtight wood stove burns at an efficiency of 50 percent, an oil furnace burns at 65 percent, natural gas at 75 percent, and electricity at 100 percent.

But knowing this is not enough. You also need cost information.

The costs of various forms of energy are evaluated differently, which makes comparisons difficult. Such comparisons are further complicated by variations in the cost of wood. According to a recent survey of classified ads in newspapers throughout Maryland, prices for oak firewood — cut, split and delivered — range from \$120 to \$150 per cord. And these prices may increase as the winter progresses.

However, comparisons of the cost of various heating fuels can

be made on the basis of their heat equivalents as expressed in dollars per million Btu (\$/MBtu). A comparison of different fuel sources based on current prices (early December 2000) in the central Maryland area follows:

| Fuel Source | Cost | \$/Mbtu |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| Oak firewood | \$120/cord | \$10.00 |
| | \$140/cord | \$11.67 |
| | \$160/cord | \$13.33 |
| fuel oil | \$1.60/gallon | \$17.84 |
| electric baseboard | 8.39 cents/Kilowatt hour | \$24.58 |
| electric heat pump | 3.36 cents/Kilowatt hour | \$ 9.84 |
| soft coal | \$135/ton | \$ 9.00 |
| liquid propane gas | \$1.75/gallon | \$28.95 |
| natural gas | \$.99/ccf | \$15.23 |

As the table shows, firewood — even as \$140 a cord — is a competitively priced and economical source of heat — especially when compared to liquid propane, natural gas, fuel oil and electric baseboard heat.

Firewood can be used to supplement your existing high-cost heat source and provide significant savings on weekends and evenings.

Before making a decision about switching from one heating method to another, however, you need to take into consideration the cost of installing a new heater or making your existing system safe. 'If you think that firewood might be the best alter-

converter to reduce emissions, the price goes higher.

So it may take years of fuel savings to pay for a new installation. However, if you already have a wood stove or fireplace insert, you may incur only the minimal costs involved in cleaning and inspecting the existing chimney and stove. And if you are in a position to legally collect your own wood, the savings will be even greater.

It is the policy of the Maryland Cooperative Extension that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, religion, disability, age or national origin.



Average Farm Feed Costs for Handy Reference

To help farmers across the state to have handy reference of commodity input costs in their feeding operations for DHIA record sheets or to develop livestock feed cost data, here's last week's average costs of various ingredients as compiled from regional reports across the state of Pennsylvania.

Remember, these are averages, so you will need to adjust your figures up or down according to your location and the quality of your crop.

- Corn, No.2y — 2.19 bu., 3.93 cwt.
- Wheat, No.2 — 2.29 bu., 3.83 cwt.
- Barley, No.3 — 1.55 bu., 3.32 cwt.
- Oats, No.2 — 1.34 bu., 4.19 cwt.
- Soybeans, No.1 — 4.19 bu., 6.99 cwt.
- Ear Corn — 60.52 ton, 3.03 cwt.
- Alfalfa Hay — 88.75 ton, 4.44 cwt.
- Mixed Hay — 88.75 ton, 4.44 cwt.
- Timothy Hay — 83.00 ton, 4.15 cwt.



WATERLESS TOILETS

"SUN-MAR" Composting Toilets

Several models available including non-electric.

- NO Septic System
- NO Chemicals

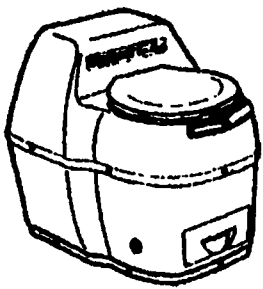
Save the Environment!
Recycle Back to Nature!

FREE:

12 Page Color Catalog

We Perform Septic Inspections & Certifications

ECO-TECH Call Today 1-800-879-0973



J-STAR

YOUR ALL-IN-ONE FARMSTEAD EQUIPMENT SOURCE

Silo Unloader Technology Takes a Giant Leap Forward!

BIG JIM Quantum SYSTEM

TOWER SILOS REALLY MEASURE UP!



Measure for measure, nothing beats a tower silo for storing forage. Just compare them to bunkers which have up to 45% storage loss, lower capacity, increased labor and lots of inconvenience.

Towers lose just 3% to 7% because of gravity, feed weight and a good unloader like the Big Jim QUANTUM System.

QUANTUM can be installed in any type of 20' to 30' forage silo. . . conventional or oxygen limited and will make your tower silo even better!

CALL US TODAY FOR A VIDEO AND BROCHURE



The Silo Unloader Experts

LEASE IT TODAY WITH ONE PAYMENT DOWN!

VOLUMAXX GIVES YOU A CHOICE OF DISTRIBUTION



HI-LIFT LEGS

The new advance design Volumaxx unloader gives you the best of both worlds... your choice of distribution. New HI-LIFT legs let you raise the unloader an extra 15" into the silo roof, so you can use a conventional side

distributor. Or, choose the Jamesway Powermaxx™ broad pan silage distributor. With proper distribution, you'll have better quality feed, and you'll increase your silo's capacity up to 35%. And we can prove it!



Volumaxx™ unloader. Expect the best from the leader.

- CABLE ALLEY SCRAPER
- WASTE HANDLING EQUIPMENT DUMPS - TANKS - TILLAGE APPLICATOR
- FEED HANDLES BELTS - FEEDERS - CONVEYORS

See These Dealers For Details Now...

FRANKLIN'S FARM SERVICE
Laceyville, PA
717-869-2407

HOOVER EQUIPMENT
Tyrone, PA 16686
814-684-1777

McMILLEN BROTHERS
Loysville, PA
717-789-3961
(VanDale Dealer)

ROVENDALE AG & BARN EQUIPMENT
Watsontown, PA 17777
570-538-9584
OR 570-742-4226

SOLLENBERGER SILOS CORP.
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-264-9588

HARRY TROOP
Cochranville, PA 19335
215-593-6731

LAPP'S BARN EQUIPMENT SALES & SERVICE
Gap, PA 17527 717-442-8134

WIGGERS FARM EQUIPMENT
Cory, PA
814-664-2661

STAR SILOS
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-5708

SOMERSET BARN EQUIPMENT
Somerset, PA 15501
814-445-5555

MARYLAND
GLADHILL TRACTOR MART
Frederick, MD 21701
301-663-6060

HISTAND'S FARM & HOME SERVICE
Rome, PA
717-744-2371

JAMES L. HOSTETTER
McVeytown, PA 17051
717-599-6386

BARLEY STRAW

BALE IN-A-BAG
A Natural Pond Treatment

- * Environment Friendly
- * Suppresses Algae
- * Easy to apply & cost effective

To Order 1-888-422-5243
www.baleinabag.net