

M&R FEEDS AND FARM SUPPLY

A Division of Brent Clifford Feeds Ltd.

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Hardwood or Softwood Pellets?

Wood pellets are manufactured from compacted sawdust. The sawdust is a byproduct from sawmills and other industries that use wood. The sawdust or ground wood is simply put under pressure and extruded. The pressurization of the wood causes the wood pitch (sap) to separate and act as a binder as the pellets cool. The wood pellets do not have any glue or such. Most pellet fuels have a 5-10% moisture content.

All wood species have virtually the same “heat value” per oven-dried pound. When purchasing firewood, the species matters because different woods have different densities and the cord (measure) will then weigh more for hardwood, resulting in more BTU’s per dollar. Wood pellets, however, are manufactured from softwood or hardwood to an industry standard of 40 pounds per cubic foot. Every bag weighs the same and contains the same amount of heat, like buying oil by the litre. The wood species used to make the pellet, therefore, does not affect heat content.

Wood pellets contain about 16.4 million BTUs/ton, or 328,000 BTUs/bag. This translates to **8,200 BTUs/lb**.

Traditionally, hardwood has been the preferred fuel in wood stoves and fireplaces because it has a lower moisture content, is a denser fuel, burns longer and has hotter coals. Softwood is known for burning hotter initially, easy to light, having more pitch or sap, more sparks and sound as it burns, but burning up more quickly. The pelletizing process takes away many of these differences.

Most people jump to the conclusion that “we have always burned hardwood in our woodstove so hardwood must be better.” This is not true when it comes to pellets.

The first and most important thing to remember is that you are buying pellets by weight, not by volume. A cord of dry hardwood versus dry softwood weights about 2-3 times as much. However, a pound of dry hardwood weights the same as a pound of dry softwood. So, what counts is the heat output of each. This is where softwood wins. A softwood pellet will produce 10-20% more BTUs per pound than hardwood, and create a lighter ash, depending on the species.

M&R Feeds, have been supplying quality grade wood pellets to pellet stove customers in this area for several years. We offer both hardwood and softwood pellets, and encourage you to consider the BTU capacity of wood pellets, and the quality o the pellet.

We offer delivery service, warehousing service and competitive prices at all three locations: Micksburg, Pembroke and Shawville.

For more information, please contact any of our stores as listed above.