

## Tennessee Logger of the Year Nomination – Dale Seals

Dale Seals, owner/operator of Dale Seals Logging, is a Tennessee Master Logger and a fifth-generation logger with one of the premiere logging operations in Claiborne, Hancock, and surrounding counties. He began operation of Dale Seals Logging in 1999 and has built one of the area's largest logging operations through honesty, integrity, and attention to detail that has built a tremendous amount of trust with landowners in the region. In addition to a large and successful logging operation, Dale is one of the county's largest cow/calf producers. He is a Tennessee Master Beef Producer and a respected cattleman.

### SAFETY INFO

Mandatory safety meetings are held monthly with employees and are documented. In addition, weekly 'tailgate' safety briefs are also conducted to address local issues and employee concerns. The effectiveness of these meetings is evidenced by Dale Seals Logging winning multiple safety awards from Forestry Mutual Insurance Company.

Safety standards in harvesting and, particularly, transportation are rigorously adhered to as evidenced by Dale Seals Logging having no issues in transporting logs to Virginia mills. Most Tennessee and Kentucky loggers refuse to haul in Virginia due to famously tough traffic laws and enforcement.

As harvesting is done almost entirely by machine, safety features on all equipment is maintained to top working order along with fire extinguishers in working order on each machine and truck. Safety vests, hard hats with hearing protection, and protective eyewear is provided for all employees and employees are required to use the PPE at all times on the job site.

Dale can do and has done every job on a logging site including running every piece of equipment used. This gives him a clear understanding of the risks each employee runs every day. This allows him to focus his safety training and PPE selection to maximize employee protection.

### FOREST MGT INFO

Dale Seals was a very early adopter of modern forestry management principles and was in one of the very first Tennessee Master Logger classes in East TN. He follows sustainable forestry guidelines with a strict adherence for two reasons. The first reason is that it is the right thing to do to ensure that future generations have clean water, wildlife, and timber to cut. Secondly,

conducting a logging job in a sustainable and conscientious manner insures that landowners are happy and that is the key to building a successful business in the long-term.

Dale conducts both clear cuts and select cuts in the hardwood timber of East TN. He bases his decisions on what the landowner desires as well as forest management plans prepared by TN Division of Forestry, when applicable. He has been recognized for the outstanding quality of his clear cut operations by timber buyers and mills in the region.

Dale complies with all BMP's in constructing roads, crossing creeks, and constructing log landings. His long experience as a beef cattle and forage producer allows him particular insight in to establishing correct species of grass, legumes, or a mix in order to alleviate erosion concerns while providing food and cover for wildlife. In addition, Dale has worked with USDA/NRCS to maximize water quality protection on his job sites through the proper use of buffer strips.

Dale takes particular interest in getting to know landowners and their goals. He has referred many landowners to TDF Area Foresters so that they understand completely their options. He believes that the only way to succeed in the logging business is to make sure each customer is satisfied.

#### TIMBER HARVESTING INFO

Dale Seals Logging has invested heavily in machinery to maximize both productivity and employee safety. Dale currently runs one (1) feller/buncher, one (1) shovel machine, one (1) excavator, three (3) bulldozers, three (3) log skidders, three (3) knuckleboom log loaders with de-limbers and buck saws, three (3) service trucks, three (3) semi log trucks/trailers, and three (3) quad axles log trucks. The equipment is divided between two logging crews and each crew chief/foreman is responsible for ensuring maintenance is performed on all equipment. Routine maintenance and minor repairs are performed by crew members while outside sources may be used for major repairs.

In addition to following BMP's and sustainable forestry guidelines, Dale is always concerned with the aesthetics of the job site because this is key to keeping landowners happy. The job has to be done right AND it has to look visually appealing. To that end, particular care is taken to the disposal of tops and slash and the establishment of vegetation on all landings and disturbed areas. Trash is removed daily and the site left as clean as possible. In addition to operating with private landowners, Dale Seals Logging has conducted several logging operations on the Chuck Swan WMA which has certified tree farm status. The foresters at Chuck Swan are always pleased with Dale's professionalism and the efficiency of his logging crews.

## BUSINESS MGT INFO

Dale Seals Logging employs, in addition to Dale himself, two (2) foremen/equipment operators, one (1) excavator operator, two (2) bulldozer operators, two (2) log skidder operators, two (2) knuckleboom operators, and five (5) log truck drivers. All employees are covered with workman's comp and general liability through Forestry Mutual Insurance Company. Dale maintains a steady workforce through competitive wages and a genuine concern for his men's welfare.

Dale and his company enjoy an excellent relationship in the local business community. He believes that it is very important to do business locally as much as possible. Dale is supported by locals and will do whatever he can to return that support. He is known for always paying his bills as well as for providing employment for fourteen people year-round.

## OTHER INFO

Dale is an active member of the Tennessee Forestry Association, Deacon of Lone Hill Missionary Baptist Church, and is a member of Claiborne High Vocational Advisory Board. He is being interviewed by Southern Logging Times on August 4, 2022.

Dale has given assistance to others including hosting tours of logging sites with explanations of the different aspects of the harvest process. He is the preferred operator for F&W Forestry to bring clients to view proper clear cuts. Success in working with public is evident in the size/success of the company, Dale is preferred logger for many landowners in the county. He is highly regarded by local Division of Forestry personnel and local government officials will consult with Dale on matters that pertain to the timber industry.

Dale has participated in Log-A-Load for Kids in past years. He is a generous donor/supporter of local youth sports programs from pee-wee through high school as well as being a donor/supporter of the Claiborne High FFA Chapter.









