

Michigan Primary Wood Producers Survey 2014

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Introduction

Michigan's primary wood producers were canvassed in 2015 as part of a periodic census of the industry conducted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

The primary objective of this survey was to determine the status and composition of the industry, type of wood produced and hauled, and equipment used by wood producers and wood haulers across the state in 2014.

Method

Response was voluntary and no incentive to respond was given. Respondents could provide as much or as little information as they wished. Many surveys were returned partially completed and multiple attempts were made to reach respondents by telephone to complete their information.

The information in this report reflects data collected by MDNR of timber producing firms active in 2014. For the purposes of this report, producers include loggers, truckers, wood brokers and wood dealers. Aggregate data from the survey has been summarized in this report.

Key definitions:

Sawlogs - Includes roundwood logs and bolts processed at sawmills into a variety of sawn products (lumber, cants, squares, blanks, etc.).

Veneer logs - Includes roundwood logs and bolts processed at veneer mills into a variety of peeled, sliced, stamped, or cut products (sheathing, panels, plywood, containers, sticks, etc.).

Pulpwood -includes roundwood logs, bolts, and chips used in the manufacture of wood pulp for making paper and paperboard products.

Woody Biomass/Biomass - identifies mill residues used in the manufacture of wood pulp or composite products (particle board, chip board, flake board, engineered lumber products, etc.) and sourced by co-generating power facilities.

Post, Poles, and Pilings - Includes roundwood logs milled (cut, peeled, etc.) into standard sizes (lengths and circumferences) to be put in the ground to provide vertical and lateral support in buildings, foundations, utility lines, and fences. May include nonindustrial (unmilled) roundwood that has been cut directly into posts for domestic and local uses.

Roundwood – Includes sawlogs, veneer logs, pulpwood, bolts, and posts, poles and pilings.

Survey Respondents

Requests for survey data were sent to 1,925 potential companies in Michigan in 2014. Of that total, 782 were successful contacts and 1,143 were non-respondents. Primary wood producers and wood haulers in the state had not been surveyed since 2008.

Of the 782 successful contacts, 637 active firms were confirmed in 2014. In 1992, a survey of wood producers revealed approximately 1100 statewide (Michigan, 1992). Between 1992 and 2014, those companies responding to survey questionnaires dropped by approximately 30%. The number of producers can be misleading; many potentially active producers are unreachable for a variety of reasons and unresponsive to requests for information.

Survey Results

Type of Producer or Wood Hauler

Respondents were asked what type of business they classify themselves as operating given four main options. Figure 1 shows the type of wood producer. As expected, 267 companies identify themselves as a logging company, followed by 139 as a trucking company. Compared to 1992, logger and trucker responses decreased by 538 and 90, respectively. In 1992, 73% of the respondents classified themselves as a logger whereas in 2015, 44% of the respondents classified themselves as loggers.



Figure 1

1. Sawmill are mills that have their own wood producing crews owned and operated by the mill
2. Logger/Sawmill identifies as a joint owner of both
3. Trucker/Sawmill identifies as a joint owner of both
4. Other are producers who chose not to affiliate with any of the options listed

Level of Hours of Operation

Respondents were asked to report the amount of time they operate their wood producing business by selecting full time, part time, seasonal, or intermittent. Full time would be 40 hours or more per week, part time is less than 40 hours per week, seasonal is operating full time but not year-round, and intermittent is operating as needed or when the producer was able. Figure 2 shows the level of operation. 210 companies responded that they operate full time.

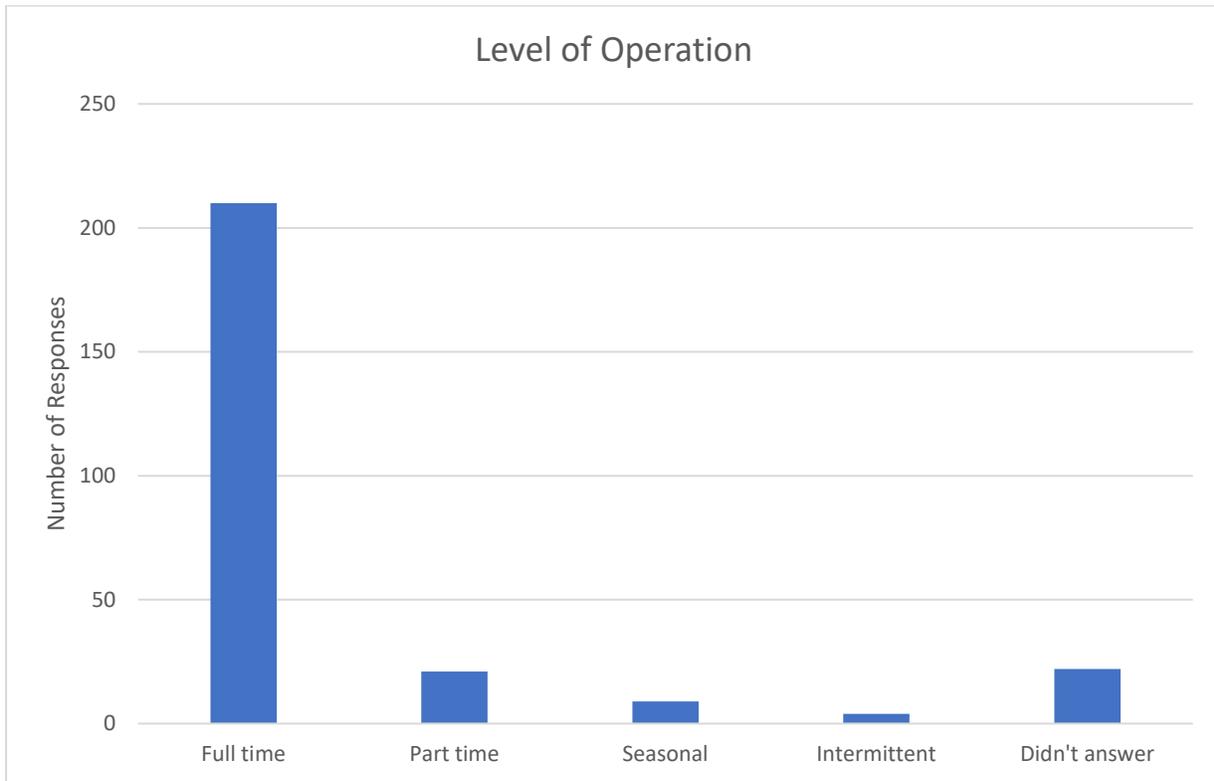


Figure 2

Types of Products Produced

Respondents were queried on the types of wood products they generate from the forest. Most companies produce a variety of products. Figure 3 shows the key products produced in the forest. 288 respondents produced some form of roundwood material, such as sawlogs, veneer logs, pulpwood, and bolts. Other key products produced were firewood, in two forms; pulpwood length (100") (161 companies) and processed (cut and split to useable standard lengths of 18-24") (43 companies).

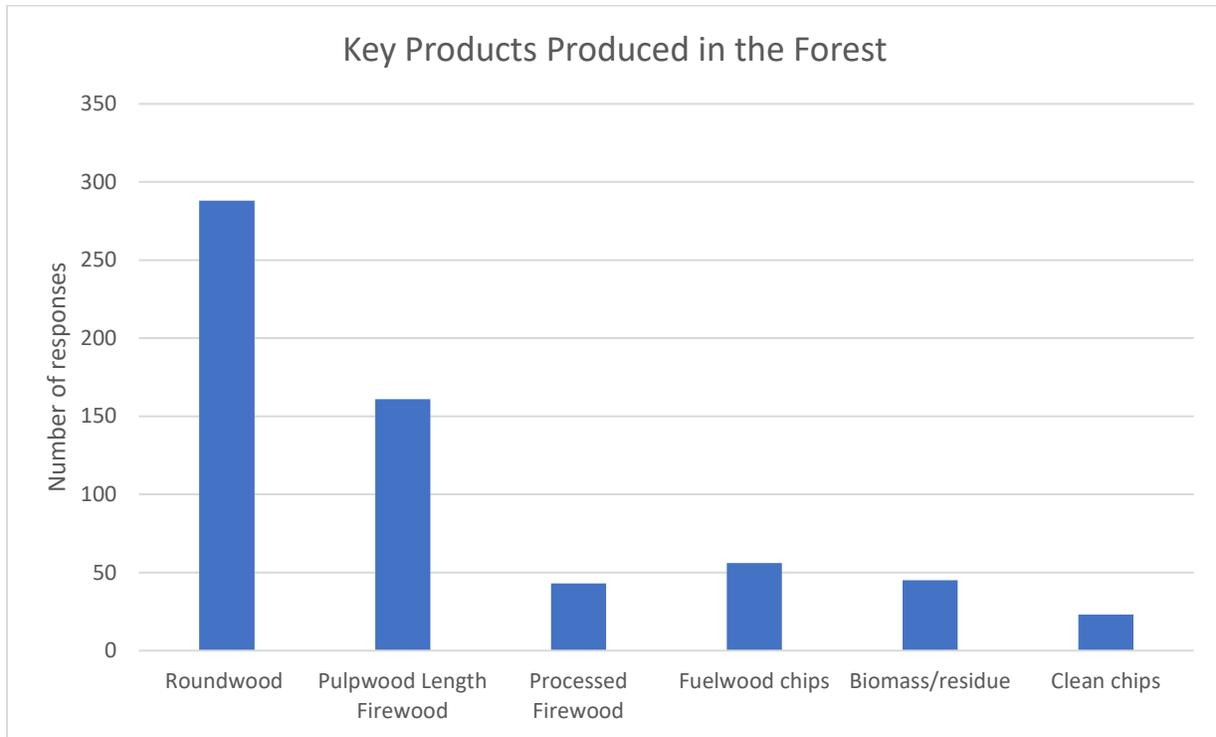


Figure 3

Types of Ownership of Standing Timber Purchased and Harvested

The 2015 survey gave respondents five options for the source of the wood harvested. Those sources are private land, Michigan DNR land, USDA Forest Service land, County or local government land, and Tribal land. Many wood producers' source standing timber from more than one type of land ownership. The different source combinations are noted in Figure 4. With 62% of the forestland in Michigan being held by private landowners (Pugh 2018), many producers use private forestlands as their sole source of timber to purchase. Survey results show that 83 companies purchased and harvested timber from private land only. Only 3 companies responded that they purchased and harvested timber from DNR land only.

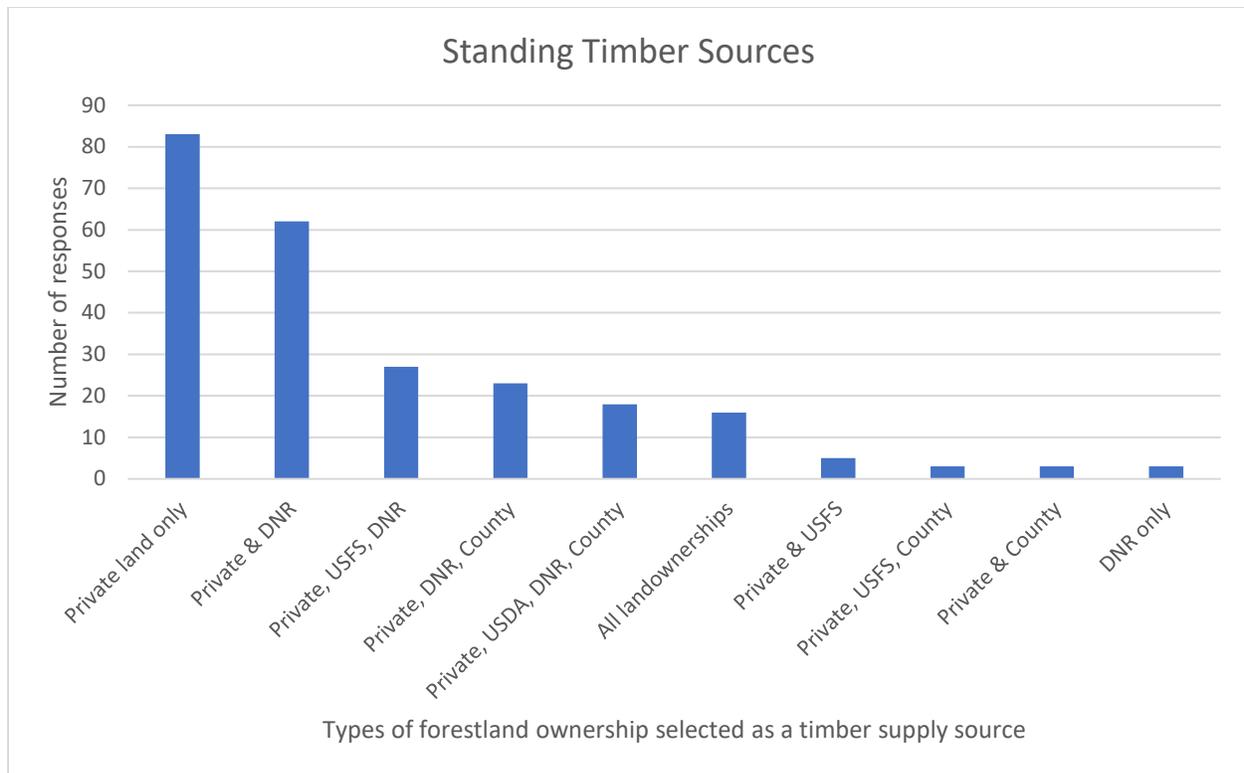


Figure 4

Harvesting System(s)

Respondents were offered 4 options of harvesting systems to select: cut to length, chainsaw with a skidder/forwarder, tree length, and chainsaw with draft horses. Their selections are noted in figure 5. A small number of respondents selected multiple harvesting systems. The various combinations of harvest systems with response numbers less than 4 are not shown in figure 5.

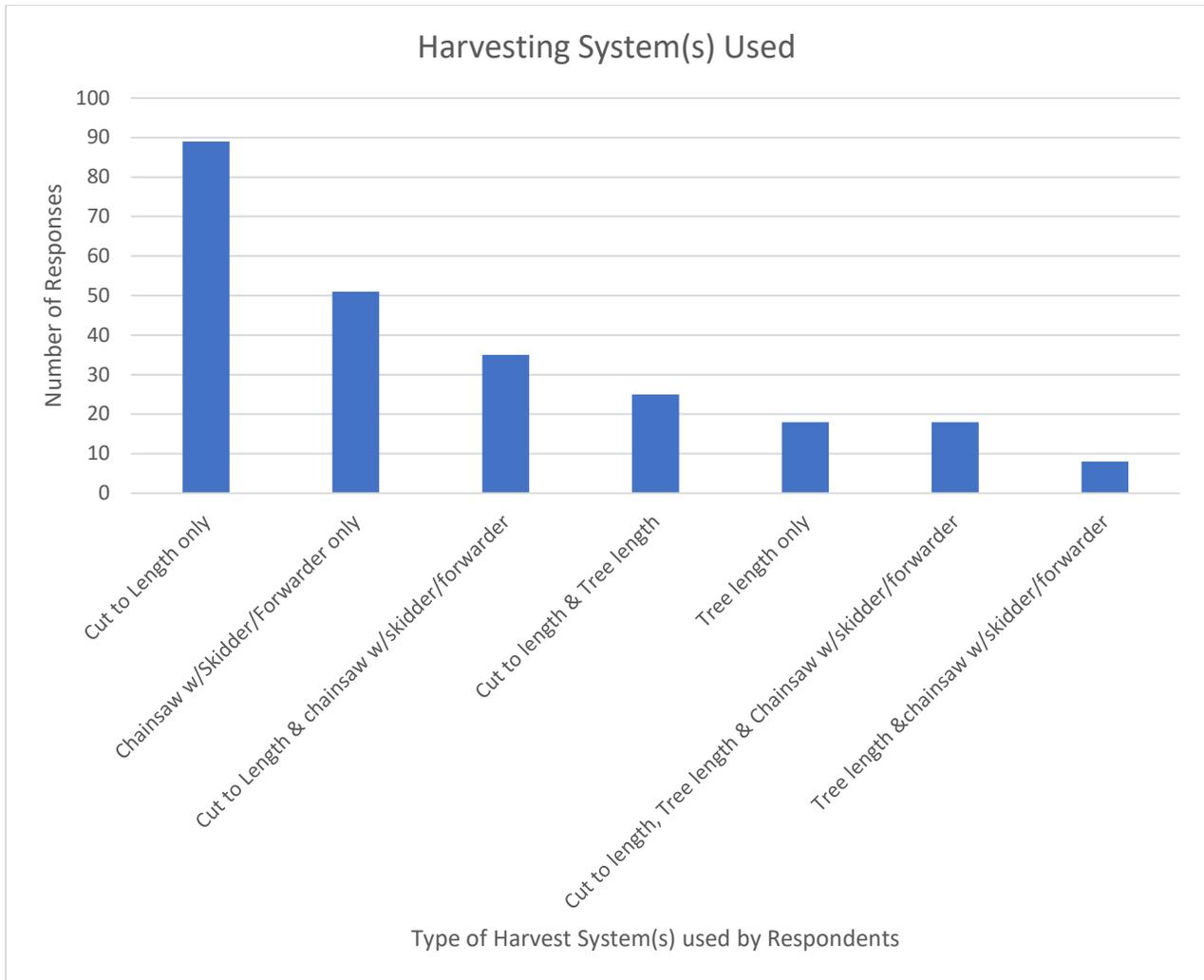


Figure 5

Trucking

Hauling of Harvested Material by Truck

Information regarding how wood is moved after it has been harvested provides additional insight into the forest products industry. Respondents were asked the following: 1. Do you own your own trucks?; 2. Do you subcontract your trucking needs; or 3. Both, Do you own your own trucks and use subcontractors for your trucking needs? We have been told that many companies find that they cannot move their wood products sufficiently with their own equipment and will hire contract trucks periodically or regularly depending on the harvesting job. Figure 6 shows that 24% use a combination of their own trucks and subcontractors. Based on survey results, 57% of respondents use subcontracted trucking for all their business needs.

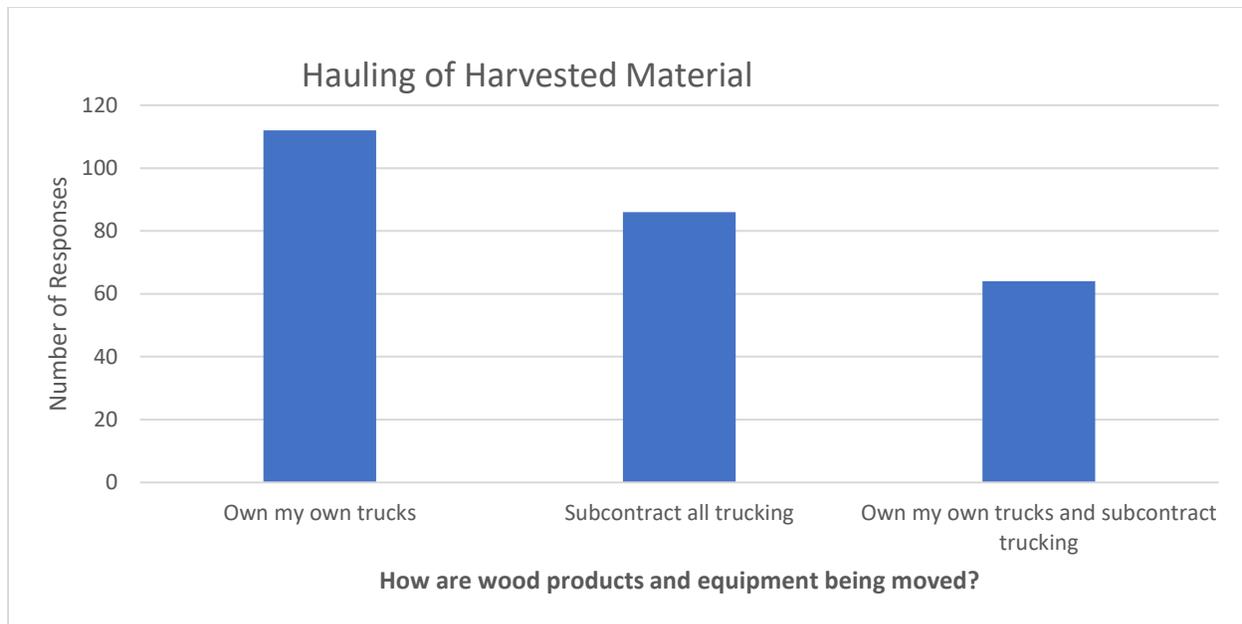


Figure 6

Products Hauled by Truck

Many companies can and will haul a variety of wood products. 159 out of 168 survey respondents stated they haul some form of roundwood material. Only 14% stated that they only haul chips, harvest residues, and/or mill/mmanufacturer residues. No respondents checked that they haul or move equipment. This was surprising as we know of contract haulers with equipment trailers specific to the logging industry. Those contractors either didn't respond to our survey or if they did, did not indicate hauling or moving equipment.

Hauling Routes

Due to the logistics of a border crossing and the vast geography of Michigan, very few respondents to the survey noted that they haul to and/or from Canada. Lack of trucking capacity and truck drivers continues to grow as a factor affecting the forest products industry. (Bjerklie, 2019)

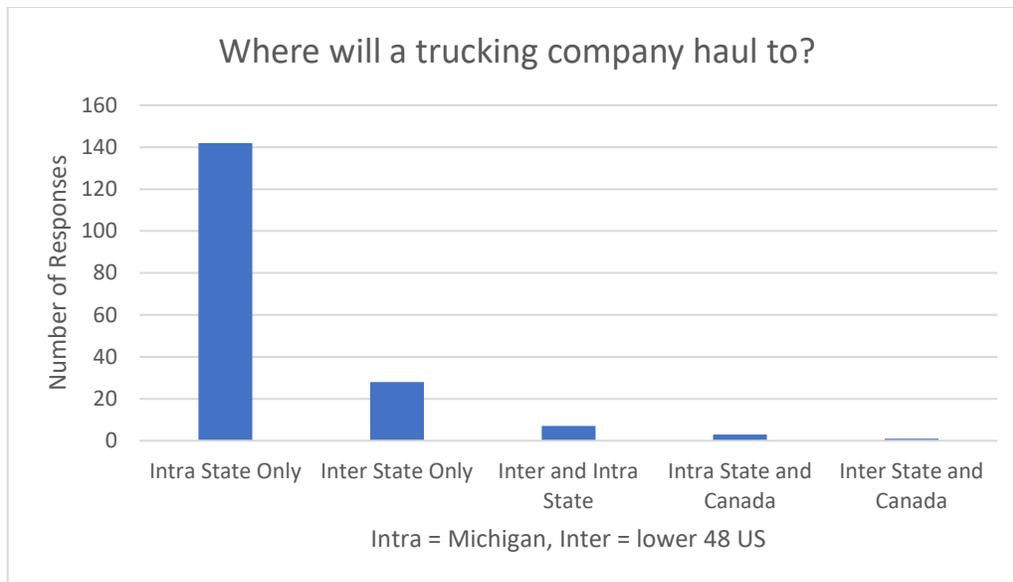


Figure 7

Executive Summary

These results are from a sample of the wood producers in the state of Michigan producing and/or moving wood in 2014. A copy of the original survey can be found by clicking this link for the 2014 Producer Survey – Michigan Loggers, Truckers, Brokers, and Dealers (add link).

This sector of the wood products industry will continue to be difficult to collect information from for various reasons. Many have moved to utilizing wireless phones for all business activities, few have active and updated web pages, and most fail to see value in providing information on their business to the government. As many as 50% of the wood producers in the state could currently be unaccounted for. The Michigan Forest Products Industry Directory (MFID) may increase the perceived value of a future survey to wood producers as it will act as a direct link to free advertising for each business that responds. In addition, they will be able to easily update their online record. Any service that increases the ability to validate their active business status would be helpful in tracking loggers, truckers, brokers and dealers.

References

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Pugh, Scott A. 2018. Forests of Michigan, 2017. Resource Update FS-153. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 4 p. <https://doi.org/10.2737/FS-RU-153>.

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