

SAWMILL FORUM

CASEY CREAMER

SAW DOCTOR



Should I hammer saws any differently for a mill that has a vertical edger instead of a regular edger?

Let me first expand your question to include mills that also have a line bar resaw.

If you are really hammering saws to a close enough tolerance, the answer would be no. On the other hand, you may be hammering saws well enough to work okay on mills that don't have a vertical edger or a line bar resaw. In that case my answer changes.

The fact that you are asking this question suggests to me that you are having trouble getting your saws to run properly on a mill with a vertical edger. That also tells me that your saws may be close enough to run good enough for your customers who have mills with conventional edgers and no resaws, but they may not be good enough to withstand the scrutiny that happens at mills that have vertical edgers and/or resaws.

Consistency is one thing that vertical edger equipped mills need. This means that every saw you hammer has to stand within about 5 thousandths of the same place, so that the sawyer isn't forced to adjust the position of the edger. Otherwise, if the edger is adjusted to a saw that is considered to be flat on the log side, the first time the mill sees a saw that is even slightly dished to the log side—even if the saw is running straight enough—you risk a situation where the edger doesn't saw all the way through the edgeboard. And of course if the saw was dished slightly to the board side, the vertical edger would tend to leave cut lines in the cant.

Add to that situation the idea that if a saw isn't flat on the log side, it also won't be sawing as straight as it should be. This will of course exaggerate the problem with the edger, leaving marks in the cant or not sawing all the way through the edgeboards.

The situation is slightly different when hammering saws for a mill with a line bar resaw, in that the biggest problem for the resaw is unsquare cants. When the resaw encounters an

unsquare cant, the first board will be a worthless wedge from top to bottom (or if you're lucky, a clapboard). As most of you know, in many cases that first board had the potential to be the most valuable part of the cant, so trashing it is usually not economically desirable, and rarely goes unnoticed—just as marks on a cant face, or edgeboards with edging still attached to them, also rarely go unnoticed.

That means that if your saws are not standing exactly where they should be (being flat on the log side) and cutting very accurate lumber, your phone will be ringing and it won't be to compliment you on the quality of your work.

A mill with no resaw and a conventional edger may not be cutting the most accurate lumber, on the other hand, the lumber might be good enough to cause no problems downstream, giving no cause for complaint.

If they are making as much lumber as they are supposed to and there are no complaints from the customers, then even if the saws aren't performing all the way up to their potential, it probably won't be an issue. In this scenario, as far as the mill is concerned, all is right with the world. And of course when the mill you are hammering for thinks all is right with the world, it is certainly natural for you to agree.

But once you start doing saws for mills that require closer tolerances on their lumber, you start to find out that you need closer tolerances on the saws you put up.

Of course, once you are putting up all of your saws to those closer and more demanding tolerances, you will find that the saws run just a little bit better on the mills that are not running vertical edgers or resaws. Will those mills notice the difference? Many will, but there are some who won't, simply because as far as they know, the quality of their final product hasn't changed. It is still within their required running tolerance. Once you are within a running tolerance, getting better than that might not be noticed.

But when you are doing saws for mills with a resaw or a

vertical edger, and their saws are producing lumber that doesn't meet their running tolerances, they will notice—immediately.

The good news is that the best way to get really good at hammering saws is to start doing saws for those mills. They can and will give you really good feedback on exactly what the saws are doing—or not doing—and pretty soon it will be easy for you to figure out how to get your saws to be consistently flat on the log side.

So the ultimate answer is that no, you don't need to hammer saws any differently for mills equipped with vertical edgers or linebar resaws. You just have to hammer all of your saws well enough to withstand the scrutiny of your most demanding customers, and then all of your saws will work properly on all of the mills, providing someone at the mill is able to sharpen them correctly. And that part is, unfortunately, beyond your control.

Questions about sawmills and their operation should be sent to Forum, The Northern Logger, P.O. Box 69, Old Forge, NY 13420, FAX #315-369-3736.

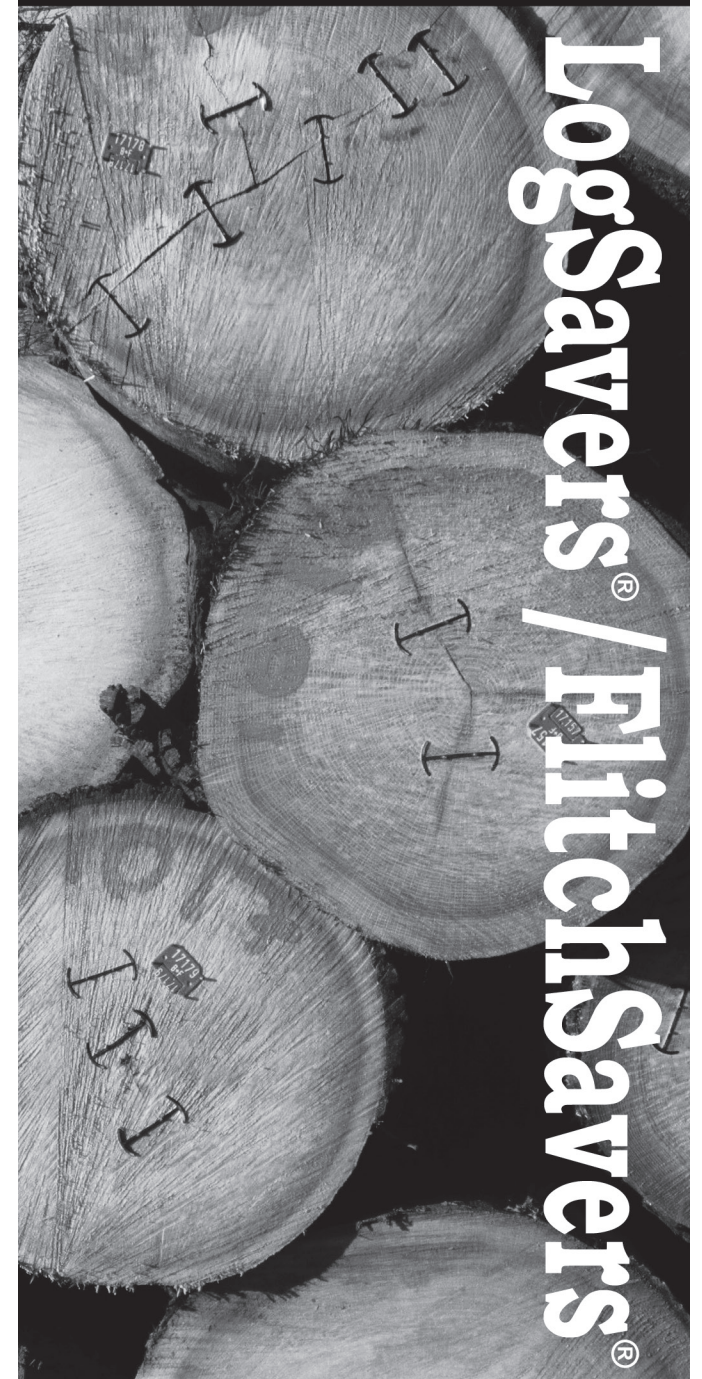
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