What are you burning?

Posted by jlw6249 - 12 Nov 2012 15:05

I thought I had a line on all the corn I could handle for cheaper ($1,000 for 4 tons) through a relationship with a local farmer, but he said the corn crop just didn't turn out as he thought it would and is worried he won't have enough for the winter,so....

I found Somerset Hardwood Pellets at Lowes for $199/ton and had a coupon for $25 off thanks to my wife. I bought two tons and well...

On Pr-1 (lowest setting) they burn long and put out decent heat, in the 40's outside, keeps the house in the 70's. But the temperature has been dropping through the 30's and into the 20's here in tempermental NY, so I turned the stove up and... within a couple hours the burn pot is overtaken with ash and begins to block the auger feed.

I tried running with the Aux at 9, same result.

I went and picked up a couple bags on Lignetics (which I burned some last year) turned it on Pr-2, no problems over night, on Pr-3 and no problems again.

Does anyone have any experience with Somerset? A lot of reviews say how good they are but even the cheap pellets I burned when I couldn't get anything else last year, did not fill the pot with ash the way these do.

==========

Re: What are you burning?

Posted by Nogas - 12 Nov 2012 17:56

I have a different stove, but they burn great in mine. I have the stirrer removed and after many hours, I have to remove part or the ash and spread out the hot ash. Doesn't matter what type, same thing, unless I can add a little corn, then it pushed down into the ash pan.

==========

Re: What are you burning?

Posted by FirepotPete - 12 Nov 2012 21:38

---

jlw6249 wrote:

I thought I had a line on all the corn I could handle for cheaper ($1,000 for 4 tons) through a relationship with a local farmer, but he said the corn crop just didn't turn out as he thought it would and is worried he won't have enough for the winter,so....

I found Somerset Hardwood Pellets at Lowes for $199/ton and had a coupon for $25 off thanks to my wife. I bought two tons and well...

On Pr-1 (lowest setting) they burn long and put out decent heat, in the 40's outside, keeps the house in the 70's. But the temperature has been dropping through the 30's and into the 20's here in tempermental NY, so I turned the stove up and... within a couple hours the burn pot is overtaken with ash and begins to block the auger feed.

I tried running with the Aux at 9, same result.

I went and picked up a couple bags on Lignetics (which I burned some last year) turned it on Pr-2, no problems over night, on Pr-3 and no problems again.

Does anyone have any experience with Somerset? A lot of reviews say how good they are but even the cheap pellets I burned when I couldn't get anything else last year, did not fill the pot with ash the way these do.

That's strange. I could see the same thing happening with a different pellet and then thinking something on the board, feed rate maybe, had gotten changed since last year.

Have you tried mixing them 50/50 and see what happens? Do the pellets look the same? If the somersets are smaller and shorter maybe they got busted up and are feeding more than what the others do for the same amount of revolutions out of the auger.

I can't imagine that much difference in pellets to cause that tho. Keep us updated on this, there is an answer somewhere as to why this happened.

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by jlw6249 - 12 Nov 2012 23:13

The somersets are significantly shorter 1/4" to 3/4", versus the Lignetics 1/2" to 1 1/2" on average. I compared breaking similiarly sized pellets of each and the somerset were much softer than the lignetics and the somerset's bags were dirtier as well.

I did a 30:70 mix of Lignetics to Somerset and around 3 am when I got up to check the stove and pull out the draft slide to drop the ashes, the burnpot was nearly full of ash again.

I turned the Aux to 9 and it cleared up. It seems that these Somerset Pellets are just producing an enormous amount of ash.

As for now I will burn them when I can, but need to supplement with Lignetics or Dry Creek for colder nights.

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by Nogas - 13 Nov 2012 00:23

I have burned some that have had large amounts of silica in them, left over from sand paper, and it would form an ash block that looked like concrete. The Somerset pellets I have are longer, more like the Lignetics. Wonder if the bags have been abused or over handled????

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by FirepotPete - 13 Nov 2012 00:50

Nogas wrote:

I have burned some that have had large amounts of silica in them, left over from sand paper, and it would form an ash block that looked like concrete. The Somerset pellets I have are longer, more like the Lignetics. Wonder if the bags have been abused or over handled????

That's exactly what I'm thinking NOGAS. I've gotten pellets that burned great and then get more of the same brand and are terrible. Usually if they get wet they puff up a lot, but I suppose a small amount of moisture could be absorbed without noticeable physical changes to the pellets. Bag being real dirty is a

sign of abuse or bad storage practice.

I'd bring them back and see what they say. Also if the somerset pellets seem softer by hand, they shouldn't feel softer to be able to feel it by hand that's for sure.

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by jlw6249 - 13 Nov 2012 19:59

_____

I am going to take that back a dozen or so at a time in my SUV, I had them delivered...

I guess I should stick with what I know to be quality. While Somersets may be quality when they leave the factory, after being forklifted, hand trucked, and possible stored outside they become less than 'premium'. The same would be said about any other brand.

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by FirepotPete - 13 Nov 2012 22:44

_____

Unfortunately that sounds like a Lowes problem. The local store manager should be made aware of this, because it doesn't matter the pellet brand if they aren't stored and handled properly they will be crap.

Good luck with returning them.

I've been lucky in that the bags I've gotten that were bad weren't bad all the way through, just a clump here and there where maybe water dripped in the warehouse. Some real dusty but never the whole pallet of bags just a few here and there.

I'd even think about contacting Somerset. I've never heard anything bad about them before so maybe they should be made aware about the local Lowes problem.

If they are a good company and want to sell a good product they don't need some distributor screwing it up for them. Word of mouth now days online can really hurt a company.

They may even find out that it's not Lowes but the transportation company they are using to get them to that particular Lowes.

==========

Re: What are you burning?
Posted by Nogas - 14 Nov 2012 02:03

_____

Last year, Home Depot (at lest one of them) had their pellets sitting in the open parking lot, covered in rain and snow. At the high price they start out with, not too many were sold. You could see where some of the pallets got nicked and swelling pellets were dropping all over.

I like Menards. They usually keep them up in the covered bay areas, and usually the Lowes here do to. Unfortunately the place I used to get pellets,they went out of business. They had theirs in a heated garage and were always super premium. Problem was, so was their price.

==========

Re: What are you burning?

Posted by jlw6249 - 16 Nov 2012 16:01

_____

I agree, I have a local Agway Hardware store that keep there pellets in a partially heated polebarn with their livestock feed. But when I called to set up a delivery as I did last year at $229/ton and $65 flat delivery, they said the price went up $275/ton and 35/ton delivery. I went the cheaper/commercial store route and will pay for it.

Fortunately, I can buy individual bags from them for $6/ which isn't too far off from the pallet price, while I sort out this mess.

However, I dug down into the pallet a little and picked a few bags further in and they seemed less abused. The bags were not as dirty and they burned with less ash on the lowest setting. I am going to ramp it up tonight and see how it goes, supposed to be low of 23 tonight.

As always, thanks.

==========