

## Track #1 - Published Abstract

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### Trends and Challenges of Logging Businesses in South Carolina

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#### Abstract

To better address the needs of logging businesses it is important to understand trends and challenges in the logging industry. Periodic logging business surveys help with gathering important long-term information. In 2017, a survey was sent out to 269 logging businesses in South Carolina. Adding to information from a 2012 survey in the state, results are showing an increased age of logging business owners with minimal recruitment from younger age classes. With the exception of logging trucks, harvesting equipment is getting older with an average equipment age of 8 years. On average, logging businesses in South Carolina operate one harvest crew, however, larger operations are present in the state. The average weekly production reported ranged from less than 20 loads to over 120 loads. The most reported challenges include trucking issues such as high cost and not enough drivers, workers compensation and equipment insurance increases of over 25% in some cases, and market restrictions due to mill quotas. Another big challenge that was reported was the difficulty of finding qualified labor. Despite these challenges, the logging industry in South Carolina is equipped to handle harvest jobs from small family forests to large industrial forests, but it will need to address the issue of aging business owners to stay a vital industry.