Cutting logs or bolts for shiitake cultivation from wooded land can provide a new income stream for the landowner. Shiitake growers are always looking for a suitable wood source and if they can find it for a fair price, a satisfactory relationship between logger and grower can last for many years.

Shiitake logs usually bring two to three times the price per cord compared to unprocessed firewood at the landing. The difference in price reflects the timing, careful selection and gentle handing to get it there. Careful consideration prior to cutting, such as species selection and timing of cut is important because the needs of the shiitake fungus are rather specific. These are discussed in detail in the pamphlet, “Selecting and Cutting Wood for Shiitake Cultivation” which can help you decide if you’d be better off selling your wood for firewood or as shiitake bed logs.

Shiitake Log Specifications

You will find that many experienced mushroom growers will pay a good price for suitable logs for shiitake cultivation. There are several key factors that can be pricing drivers for logs. Ultimately, the final price will depend on the following:

- **Wood Species:** Divided into 3 categories for commercial shiitake cultivation, wood is classified as prime, good or acceptable. Many growers will pay more for oak. Any members of the oak group are considered prime, while Sugar Maple, Beech and Ironwood are considered good. Softer hardwoods such as Red Maple and Basswood are considered acceptable. Many other species fit into each of these categories. For a more comprehensive list, see www.shiigaw.org.

- **Timing of Cut:** Healthy, green trees cut during the dormant season are essential. Wood must be protected if aged before delivery, and cut time must be specified.

- **Log Diameter and Length:** Logs can be any length (minimum of 24 inches), with a diameter from 3-8 inches.

- **Level of Scarring or Bark Damage:** A maximum of 10% bark damage may be acceptable.

Pricing Logs

Assume that the current market price for firewood cut into eight foot lengths and stacked at the landing is $80.00 per cord. That cord measures 96” L x 48” H x 48” W. Note that a “shiitake” cord will measure somewhat differently: 96” L x 48” H x 40” W (see diagram on next page).
Based on an average diameter of 5.5 inches, there would be about 162 logs per cord. Round down to 150 to allow for air space and crooked logs.

Current pricing for cultivation quality wood in the western Great Lakes states ranges from $1.00 per log (cut into 4 foot or 1 meter lengths) picked up at the harvest site, to $3.00 per log delivered. Plugging those figures into the estimated number of 150 logs per cord, gross income would range from $150.00 to $450.00 per cord. This income of course will vary with diameter, as the log count per cord will go up with smaller diameter wood and be lower with larger diameters.

Remember, this is gross income. Net income will vary depending on your time, wage and other cost of harvesting inputs.

**Buying and Selling Logs**

Past experience shows that logs can be sold from tops after a timber harvest. (Sometimes the grower comes in and does all of the cutting from the felled timber as this is a great way to clean up a site). Landowners often will allow growers to do this for free, .50/log, or even just a few pounds of mushrooms.

If you are looking to put a price on this do-it-yourself acquisition of logs, a general cost (fuel, chainsaw maintenance, transportation, wages at $12/hr. including driving time from log collection to stacking logs) is about $60/pickup load (about 25 6” diameter logs from a site 30 miles or less away); approximately $2-$3/log.

This is a model based on finding local sources for small scale production. For growers wanting thousands of logs a season, purchasing wood, preferably delivered, is worth the extra cost. Figure a dollar per log for delivery. If you are looking to sell or buy wood in quantity or even smaller amounts from local sources, check out Woodsource Connection at [www.shiigaw.org](http://www.shiigaw.org). SHIGA will post your timber sale or your request for logs free of charge. This resource is available to woodland owners and growers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa.