

P.R. Russell: A perfect partnership

by Kelly Gates



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During busy times, all four of P.R. Russell's Hogzilla TCII-1564P tub grinders can be found busy grinding wood into premium mulch products.

In 2007, New England businessmen Richard and Marco Carrier joined forces with another local entrepreneur, Peter Russell, who owned a wholesale mulch company named P.R. Russell in Richmond, ME. The partnership was the perfect pairing of complementary companies.

P.R. Russell had been supplying high quality mulch to customers throughout New England since 1989, while the Carriers owned and operated several sawmills and chip plants in the area. At the same time, Richard owned Richard Carrier Trucking, LCC Trucking and TJF Trucking, businesses that transported wood materials to operations like P.R. Russell for processing. The businesses worked extremely well together.

When Russell retired in 2009, the Carriers took the helm and today, the Carriers manage all the businesses simultaneously. According to Jill O'Connor, spokesperson for P.R. Russell, one of the first things the new business colleagues did was open a second location. "They constructed a new 17 acre paved facility here in Brentwood, NH to complement our original mulch yard in Maine," O'Connor told *WHEN*. "Now, Richard Carrier Trucking brings in bulk material from Maine, New Hampshire and Canada and we process it into mulch. The location is perfect for servicing our New England customers."

She said that they are adamant about ensuring that every load of wood material hauled to the NH and ME yards originates from forests in the Northeast and contains no foreign wood materials. While most other mulch makers incorporate pallets, construction debris and other pre-used wood materials into their blends, P.R. Russell does not.

"At times, upwards of 30 loads of the pure wood products are delivered to the yard per day," said O'Connor. "We start bringing in a lot of material for two of our mixes in August, September and October because these particular mulches need to 'cook' until spring," she noted. "Once the materials are processed through the grinders they are stockpiled until mulch deliveries start in the late winter. We also make a wide assortment of other mulches."

Environmentally friendly iron oxide and carbon black pigment are used to dye some of the color



Two of P. R. Russell's Hogzilla TCII-1564 grinders are busy stockpiling mulch for the 2010 season.

enhanced products. This coloration is blended into the raw bark using loaders before being fed into one of four Hogzilla tub grinders. The machines continue to mix the tint as they grind, effectively reducing the bark to a uniform size.

The Hogzillas, all TC models, are at the core of the mulch operation. Russell already had two of the machines before the consolidation with the Carriers. He had a TC-1464P powered by an 860 hp Cat engine and a TC-1564P with an 800 hp Cat engine. These were at the Richmond, ME site.

"We ended up bringing one of those grinders down from Maine right away and during our first year here, Richard bought another Hogzilla, a TCII-1564P with a 1050hp Cat engine," explained O'Connor. "Last year, he bought two more of the same model, bringing our total number of grinders from the manufacturer to five; most of which can produce up to 200-yards per hour."

During the company's early years, they operated a Hogzilla NG-1264P, but opted to upgrade to larger, more powerful units as the need for production capacity increased. When purchasing their newest grinders, the Carriers dealt directly with Tim Wenger, president and sales manager of Hogzilla's manufacturer, CW Mill Equipment Co., Inc. and with Brian Bergman, CW Mill's operations manager as well. Together, the executives were able to conduct a thorough analysis of P.R. Russell's business and outfit the mulch company with the most efficient equipment for its unique needs.

"Being the managers here, we believe that it is important to be actively involved, to bend over backwards for our customers and form personal relationships that make the process of buying new machinery as smooth as possible," said Bergman.