

Plenty of options for keeping the workshop cozy

One potential option is a new line of hybrid furnaces that combines would with other fuels



BY JOHN PHAIR

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A lot of new drive sheds and farm workshops have gone up around the country this summer and after last winter's spike in propane prices many rural residents are looking for more efficient ways of heating their farm buildings.

Chad Hayter of Hayter Plumbing and Heating in Alvinston, says he has been inundated with calls, primarily from rural residents, looking for alternative sources of heat for their homes and farm shops.

While propane prices have come down, he noted that last winter it was actually 22 per cent more expensive to heat a home with propane than other fuel sources even with a high efficiency furnace.

"So right now there is a lot of discussion on what fuel and what type of heating system we should be using," he said.

Fortunately, he says there are many options available and it all depends on the customer's needs and circumstances.

"Our point of view is that basically it doesn't matter if it's wood, oil, propane, natural gas, electric or geothermal," they all have their place," he said.

He noted that a new option that farmers could consider for heating either their homes or shops is Napoleon's new line of hybrid furnaces that combine the ability to burn wood with a backup option of either oil, electric, natural gas or propane.

"Napoleon...has come out with these and I think there is going to be an incredible demand for them," he said, adding that he has sold a number of them and will continue to keep them in stock.

"There are a lot of dead trees in the bush right now and people like to burn the wood."

Hayter pointed out that unlike the traditional large wood/oil furnaces that nearly every manufacturer produced, the new Napoleon combo furnaces are highly efficient.

"The one thing you don't want to do is install one of



Chad Hayter with a new hybrid Napoleon combination furnace

these big wood/oil combination and then just burn oil because that is highly inefficient," he said, adding that Napoleon combo's have an ultra-efficient wood stove side by side with a natural gas or propane furnace that runs at 96 per cent efficiency.

He pointed out that the efficiency of wood is hard to regulate because there are so many different types of wood being used and it really depends on the type and quality of the wood.

However, he said one of the problems with wood is that statistics show that the average Canadian only burns it for about three years and after that find that they either don't have the time or the inclination to cut wood.

"So you really have to be confident you are going to burn wood," he said.

He said another option to use wood would be an indoor wood boiler.

"We have a cast iron boiler for people who want to heat with wood but utilize an in-floor heating tubes," he said.

"You can heat a small shop with one of these and run lines over to the house and heat it as well."

He added they are more efficient than an outdoor wood furnace/boiler and are about half the cost.

Hayter said most farm shops today are being heated with in-floor tubing.

"If you install an in-floor heat at least you have some options," he said, adding that

with that system it's possible to heat with a wood boiler, propane, natural gas or whatever combination of those you wish to use.

He added that when farmers are building a shop they should spend some time considering their heat options before they pour the floor.

"They are basically making a decision of how that shop will be heated for the next 100 years so our theory is put the tubes in, they are low cost and you have all kinds of options in terms of what to heat with," he said.

Hayter Plumbing and Heating also specializes in geothermal installations and says over the long-term that is the best investment and the lowest cost option in terms of

heating and cooling farm buildings.

He noted that while installing a geothermal system is a major investment, the Government of Canada offers some significant incentives.

"Revenue Canada allows you to depreciate all the cost of geothermal system over a three-year period," he said, adding that it's an incentive for farmers to go renewable.

It's just what's best for you, the customer," he said.

"We can provide so many options today."

He noted that 75 per cent of Hayter Plumbing and Heating's business is rural and services a broad area spanning Lambton and Middlesex counties and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.