



# Pellet & Corn FAQs

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Congratulations on purchasing a pellet appliance! Whether you purchased it in order to save the environment or simply to save money on home heating costs, your pellet appliance (if purchased from a reputable retailer) will provide you with years of inexpensive heat. For the purpose of this document, we will refer to corn & pellet interchangeably and/or as biomass.

## How do pellet stoves work?

Pellet appliances automate as many functions as possible, the most significant being that of fuel delivery. The heat setting or thermostat controls an auger motor that delivers regulated amounts of fuel from the hopper to the fire. Automatic fuel delivery from the hopper frees the operator from frequent attention and loading, while providing clean burns and the desired comfort level. The amount of air needed for optimum combustion efficiency is delivered automatically or with minor manual adjustments. In most designs, a fan delivers air to the fire and blows exhaust byproducts out of a vent pipe that is smaller and typically less expensive than wood chimney. The fan delivers heat to the home by blowing air through heat exchangers in the stove and out into the home. Heating efficiency is greatly enhanced by removing the heat from the appliance before it can exit the system to the outside.

## Pellet vs. Wood

### Advantages

- Convenience: automatic operation
- One load can last 24 hours or more
- Fuel is conveniently stored in compact bags
- No need for a complete chimney system
- Consistent high burn (less peak than plain wood)
- Cost of operation
- Lower combustible clearances

### Disadvantages

- Unit cost is slightly higher
- Pellet appliances require electricity
- run (although battery back-ups are available)
- Wood stoves operating at peak capacity can generate more heat

## What type of pellet appliances are available?

- Freestanding Stoves: Offer the greatest flexibility in the installation choice as they can be installed virtually anywhere as long as access can be made to the outside.

## What is pellet fuel?

All pellets are biomass materials, that is, products of commonly grown plants and trees. The most common residential pellets are made from sawdust and ground wood chips, which are waste materials from trees used to make furniture, lumber, and other products. Resins and binders occurring naturally in the sawdust hold wood pellets together, so better quality pellets usually contain no additives. Pellets are available for purchase at stove dealers, nurseries, building supply stores, feed and garden supply stores, as well as big box retailers. Pellets are usually packaged in forty pound bags and sold by the bag or by the ton (50 bags).

## Is all pellet fuel created equal?