Agriculture Logistics System Comparison Guide

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Overview:

As the agriculture commercial application business grows, input costs rise and technology increases, the value that a logistics system can bring to your business is hard to ignore. This document is intended to serve as an aid to help you make the best decision for your business. The following features should be considered when determining which logistics system will best address your business needs.

Detailed Visual Representation of Fleet and Work Orders

Having one map with all needed information on it allows you to quickly reference a page, make fact based scheduling decisions and dispatch orders to the field. The AgLogic™ System has desireable features such as real-time scheduling maps with visual representation of equipment, orders and depots all on the same map. The icons that represent key logistic components are visually descriptive for quick user reference. For example, a dry order shows on the schedule map with a sun icon and assigned order turn the color of the assigned operator and indicate the scheduled priority for each order.
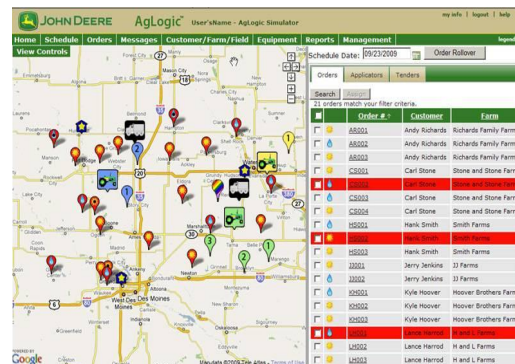
Level of Detail From the Field

Many systems have the ability to send information back from the field to the office. In order to gain the full value of improved field operations, it is important that all needed information from the field gets wirelessly sent back to the office when the work order is completed. The AgLogic System not only reports back that a job is completed; it sends back a signature, field conditions, comments and files. This allows for a field ticket to be populated in the AgLogic System while your operator is moving on to the next field. Do the systems you are comparing receive enough information from the field to complete a work order or will your operator still be required to come in and fill out paper work?

Work Order Integration

Understanding how your logistics system works with your back office system is a crucial factor in choosing the correct logistics system for your operation. Having a logistics system that can easily populate work order data allows you to make scheduling decisions in real time. The AgLogic System works with many popular back office systems to automatically populate work order information into the logistics system. The AgLogic System has available connectors to the AgroGuide™ System and the SSI Agvance® System. Also, the AgLogic System has a published, standard API that can be connected using web services to additional back office systems. The AgLogic System works with the AgroGuide System to send completed work order information from the AgLogic System to the AgroGuide System. This provides the extra benefit of improved reconciliation and invoicing. Other compatible back office systems: Agvance®, AgJunction, AgVantage®, Tracker, Oakland

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Level of Turn-by-Turn Directions

Operators require real-time, usable directions from one work location to the next. There are many versions of turn-by-turn directions in the industry ranging from office printed directions to the voice-over, in-cab guidance. The AgLogic System provides voice-over, turn-by-turn directions with real-time re-routing to accommodate actual in-field realities.

Off Line Field Capabilities

Does your application area have solid data coverage? Do all the fields that your operators run have cellular connections? When a system is a web application running on a remote field device, the application will not be able to run if connection is lost. Therefore, if a logistics in-field, mobile application is connection dependant; all functionality will be lost when a data connection is lost. The AgLogic System's in-field application is a loaded application that does not require in-field internet connection to run. Updated work order information is stored and will send back to the website once connection is re-established. Therefore, if connection is lost, the application is still usable. For example, an operator will still receive turn-by-turn directions even if a data connection is lost.

Level of Alerts

Value added alerts are a key feature of a logistics system. The AgLogic System provides three alerts that can increase efficiencies. First, the AgLogic System alerts operators if they attempt to start a work order and they are not in the correct field. To do this, a system must have a field boundary associated with it, plus the intelligence to recognize the operator and field locations and whether or not they match. Second, the AgLogic System notifies blenders of approaching tenders so blends can be prepared for quick tender loading. Third, the AgLogic System provides approaching tender alerts to the applicator to improve applicator/tender communication.

File Transfer

Getting the right information to the field is crucial to improving application efficiency. The AgLogic System has the ability to attach zip files to a work order and send them to the field. Once in the field, the orders can be un-zipped and moved to a disk/card via a portable disk drive that is attached to the CN3 docking station. Therefore, not only is the work order detail sent directly to the applicator, the need files are sent as well, which eliminates the applicator down time caused by waiting for information.

Level of Reporting

AgLogic's flexibility allows customers to pull four different reports. Because operators indicate their actions in the field, managers in the office can pull operator efficiency reports to monitor and make decisions based on facts. Also, the system allows for different access levels which allows for multiple people within an organization to have specific rights to the system to pull reports. "Reports" is a very generic term, so it is important to find out what a customer would like to do with reports and what information each system provides to help them accomplish their goals.

Carrier Connection Options

Many logistic systems use cellular data plans to transfer information from the office to the field. The agriculture industry is typically operated in remote locations with data coverage limitations. If you have a major cellular carrier in your area or negotiated corporate rates, it is important that your system works with this carrier. The AgLogic System is available with Verizon, Sprint and/or AT&T cellular connections.

Additional Fees

If a software system does not have a recurring charge with it, a few additional points should be explored. First, is there a recurring support and maintenance fee? Second, if there is no additional fee, what steps are being taken to ensure that you receive an up-to-date system that does not lose its innovation competitive advantage over time? The AgLogic System has an annual fee for the software license which includes all support, maintenance, and updates.