JUNE 2009

Fairport News

Welcome

A wintery welcome to all our new and existing clients and especially those of you reading the Fairport News for the first time!

Roger's Ramblings

Why is this year going quicker than those previous? As per usual we have been extremely busy here at Fairport. The past quarter has seen a lot of progress on several fronts, particularly in the software development division.

Precision Farming: Our precision farming module (FarmStar) has been receiving a lot of attention. Having rewritten the entire data processing "engine" over the past 12 months, Mikhail our mapping guru has had to perform quick miracles this year as the season broke and people started using the new (and old) variable rate prescription systems. Some on board devices have changed their prescription file formats and needed some instant reworking, while some of the newly supported on board devices threw up some unexpected last minute issues. We are extremely grateful to all of you who helped us get these processes operating. In particular I would like to thank Roger Mandell (Lecturer in Agronomy – Curtin University) who has been a fantastic assistant through the past year in bringing real world knowledge and understanding to our FarmStar developments. I would also like to thank those of you who were so patient in waiting for the new John Deere and the changed Flexicoil variable rate systems to get over the line. In future years we will endeavour to make sure we have all these variable rates systems updated and ready well in advance of the opening rains!

PAM Features: Over the past few months we have been doing considerable enhancements to the PAM AusVit program – thanks to the work requested by the world's largest owner of vineyards. Their focus is predominantly around obtaining accurate costing of their production. As well as some very nice new features appearing soon in PAM AusVit, some of the enhancements will find their way to all PAM versions. To name a few: formal management of business overheads, machinery maintenance schedule and reminders, more complete weather records, a less complex inventory system – and more. You can expect to see these features coming through in the next 2-3 months. In case you were not aware, all new features added to PAM are listed on the Fairport web site. Look for the links on the Support page.

Individual Animals: This section of PAM continues to keep at least one of our developers fully occupied. There is still a lot more to come in this module. We are taking on more and more clients who are corporate livestock operations and who want one program to cover all their livestock and farming bases. Stay tuned for some great new features coming through in the next 3-6 months.

PAM Enterprise: We are pleased to announce a new product PAM Mid Tier Enterprise. We found a need to introduce a version of PAM which has many of the "Enterprise" features, but not them all. Many of the mid-tier farming enterprises are geographically spread family operations that need a centralized data solution but not the corporate level (security, special roles and permissions, user auditing, interfacing with accounting software, special customisation etc.) features of our full PAM Enterprise software. With this new PAM product we have added one more networkable solution to our suite. Of course, as you would be aware, the standard PAM program has been running on networks for 10 years now. If you need more information on these solutions, give Colin Booth a call here at our office.

Hosted Software: We started offering PAM as a hosted system (PAM SaaS) on our in-house servers around 5 years ago. The uptake of this solution to the geographical spread of users within one organization has begun to get some serious traction in recent months. With these servers now 5 years old, we are about to embark on purchasing some new powerful ones. This should make the running of our hosted PAM software (and other software that we host like "Pasture Watch") a more pleasant experience. If you

have a need for people in different locations to see or enter data into your PAM system, contact us for a quote on this offering. All you need to use a PAM SaaS version is a reasonably fast internet connection.

PocketPAM: A recent trip to a FarmWISE conference in New Zealand brought me into contact with some PAM users who made some very good suggestions for enhancements to PocketPAM. We are quite aware that PocketPAM is now quite old technology. It still works fine and plenty of people are making excellent use of it. You may not realize that we originally released PocketPAM in 2001 and since that time a lot of progress has been made in both hand held hardware and mobile software development tools. We will soon be embarking on a rewrite of the PocketPAM suite of programs to take advantage of these developments. The outcome should result in faster software with some of the long awaited enhancements.

Staff Matters

We are pleased to welcome Henry Kotula – appointed as our Business Development Manager USA. Henry currently lives in North Carolina but will be moving in due course to either Florida or Indiana. Henry's an "Aussie" originating in Western Australia and is married to a lady from the US. At this stage we expect Colin to fly to meet up with Henry in Washington State to kick off his round of visits to prospective clients.

Meanwhile, Mikhail is back in his homeland (Russia) continuing to work on the rewrite of our mapping software. He will be back here in a couple of months… probably when the weather starts to turn nasty on him up there in Siberia. That makes two programmers now working externally from the office. For a couple of years now we have had the facilities in place which enable our developers to work from home or wherever. It never ceases to amaze me how these incredibly useful technologies and facilities have quietly crept into our working lives. The internet has come a long way since its crude and cumbersome beginnings.

We also wish to congratulate William Hey Tow on receiving the prestigious RD Gallier's Medal for the best graduating honours student from a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Information Systems from Curtin University. For more information please see the Curtin media release: http://campusnews.curtin.edu.au/media_centre/archives.cfm?release=8744.

Colin's Column

It has been good to hear from clients I've spoken to that most areas of Australia have had a pretty good start to the season, let's hope it continues!

Farmstar testing has taken up much of my time over the last few months. As Roger mentioned we had quite a few clients helping us with field testing all the VRT section on the software, I'd like to thank you all for your help and patience. The problem with all the various controllers having different formats for VRT will diminish in time as the new ISO 11783 standard is adopted by more manufacturers.

I will also be helping roll out three more PAM Enterprise sites over the next two months. It will be exciting to get them up and running. There are another couple of operations that are planning on implementing PAM Enterprise in the next six months. That will further establish PAM Enterprise as the standard for Corporate farming operations to manage their production records.

In amongst all of that, a trip to the USA to help Henry get up and going and doing a few presentations to prospective clients will keep me pretty busy. If you need to contact me email is the best way.

Tips & Tricks

Rainfall: PAM Version 6 users can import BOM historical monthly rainfall data by downloading a CSV file from the BOM site (http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/weather-data.shtml) and using the Tools > Import Rainfall Data option in the Rainfall Records of PAM. Other CSV files of weather station data can also be imported in a similar way.

Mapping: You can select multiple paddocks at a time by holding down the shift key as you click on them. This is helpful when deleting multiple paddock boundaries or finding out the cumulative area of the selected paddocks.

Quality Assurance (QA): Have you wondered why the program is called PAM QA Plus? PAM not only keeps track of your every day farming activities but also various quality assurance activities which you may be required to report on. These records can be found under the Data Entry menu. You can record all training undertaken by staff members (including PAM training ☺), treatments applied to stored grain, basic machine maintenance, and more. All of these details can be reported on and printed as documented proof that you are keeping up with your Quality Assurance requirements.

Dealer News

AG-IT
Northern NSW & QLD

FarmReady reimbursed training now available!!!

AG IT has two PAM QA Plus courses registered with the FarmReady reimbursement scheme (www.farmready.gov.au).

PAM QA Plus 1 day course & PAM QA Plus 1 ½ day course.

Courses are flexible and can be tailored to suit the requirements of the attendees.

Thank you to all who responded regarding interest in PAM training, we are now organising training for July and will be emailing everyone to let you know of course locations and dates.

If you are in need of training for your PAM software, please let us know.

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FarmTek Australia
VIC, TAS, SA, & Southern NSW

PAM Training is now a FarmReady approved course. Full funding for the course plus travel if required is available to approved participants.

To be eligible for the FarmReady Reimbursement Grant, you need to be either a:

• primary producer
• immediate family member of a primary producer
• member of the management team of a primary production enterprise or
• Indigenous land manager

Full details about the grant are available at www.farmready.gov.au

I am planning to run some workshops in the following areas from Mid September.

Victoria:
    Bendigo, Horsham, Swan Hill
New South Wales:
    Griffith
South Australia:
    Murray Bridge, Jamestown
Tasmania:
    Launceston

Confirmation of the venues will be sent via email.

If you would like to run a course in your region please don't hesitate to contact me.

To register your interest for a training session in your area please use the online form at www.farmtek.com.au or www.fairport.com.au.

Joanne Richardson, FarmTek Australia
~ 1300 553 446
www.farmtek.com.au

In Closing

Joke of the month:

One guy was working the help desk in the main computer lab on campus on a quiet afternoon. He noticed a young woman sitting in front of one of the workstations with her arms crossed across her chest and staring at the screen.

After about 15 minutes he noticed that she was still in the same position only now she was impatiently tapping her foot.

He asked if she needed help and she replied, "It's about time! I pushed the F1 button over twenty minutes ago!"

In other words… please contact your local dealer or Fairport for more information about all Fairport products or any item in this issue, we can't help you if we don't know you need help ☺.

Until September... Farewell from the Fairport Team