

A Better Way (to manage your Fields and Crops)

Managing fields and crops is more complex at the same time the cost of error is increasing. Farms are working with more fields, more acres, more varieties, more treatments and more environmental regulations each year. At some point, the farm's existing information system (paper, pencil, memory, maybe even spread sheets) breaks. Even when there is a person who has a good grasp of what needs to be done - the system becomes stressed as soon as that person needs to begin relying on others for help. When farms are looking for a solution to tighten their management over their fields and crops; software can be a part of the solution.

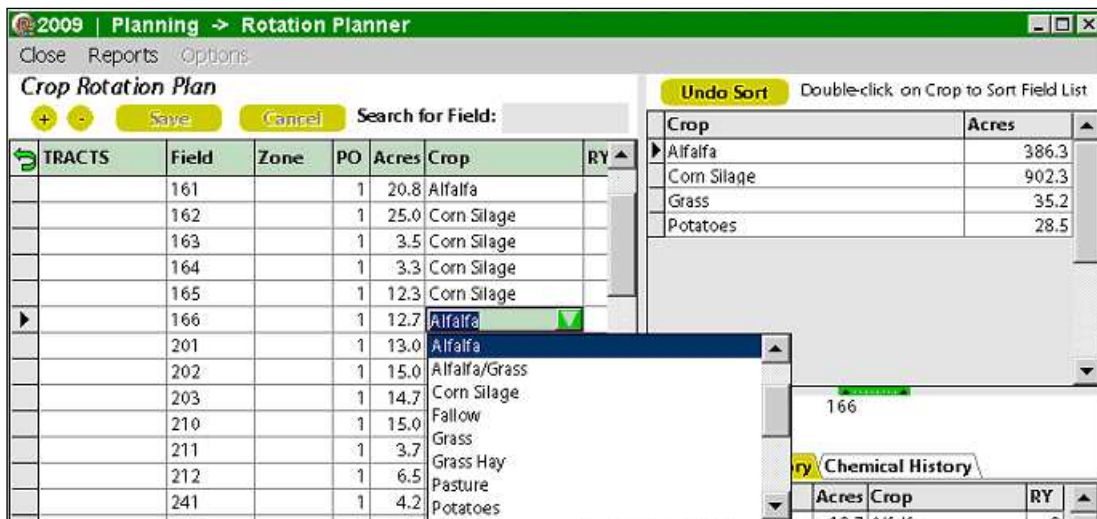
Fields and Crops Manager is a new program that will help Northeast farmers manage their fields and crops at the level of detail they prefer. Some growers may just want a good way to track their spray usage. Other growers may be more interested in planning their rotations and tracking their manure usage. What ever the area(s) of interest, this program can help. It will become available in early 2010.

“There have been several different software programs for crop management floating around for several years but none have really taken hold with Northeast growers. Either entering the information was too cumbersome, or the program demanded more detail to operate than the users were ready to provide”, according to Jack van Almelo who has been heading up a team of developers refining Fields and Crops Manager and getting it ready for general release. “We have drawn from our cow management software experience as well as guidance from a group of users, to make activity entry quicker and easier, and the program flexible for the user.

Why use Fields and Crops Manager Software?

1. Organize your fields' records.
2. Track what you plant in each field each year to make harvest lists, and to make better rotation decisions.
3. Optimize yields and track changes in your fields' fertility.
4. Track where you are putting the farm's manure (and tally the nutrients from the manure) and, if your CNMP is integrated with the program, make lists to guide your spreader(s).
5. Make orderly spray and treatment lists.
6. List fields that need to be sampled and tested this year.
7. Historical lookup of all field management information you choose to track.
8. Easy and accurate rotation planning.
9. Track costs.
10. Track yields.
11. Create your FSA reports easily. (The program will keep track of FSA identification and print lists you can use for FSA reporting).

Easy Crop Rotation Planning



TRACTS	Field	Zone	PO	Acres	Crop	RY
	161		1	20.8	Alfalfa	
	162		1	25.0	Corn Silage	
	163		1	3.5	Corn Silage	
	164		1	3.3	Corn Silage	
	165		1	12.3	Corn Silage	
	166		1	12.7	Alfalfa	
	201		1	13.0	Alfalfa	
	202		1	15.0	Alfalfa/Grass	
	203		1	14.7	Corn Silage	
	210		1	15.0	Fallow	
	211		1	3.7	Grass	
	212		1	6.5	Grass Hay	
	241		1	4.2	Pasture	
					Potatoes	

Crop	Acres
Alfalfa	386.3
Corn Silage	902.3
Grass	35.2
Potatoes	28.5

The rotation planner lets you work through each field, look at its rotation and chemical history, and then tally the total acres of each crop as you adjust each field's crop plan. When the user records a planting - the actual crop is established for the field.

Track as much, or as little information as makes sense for you.

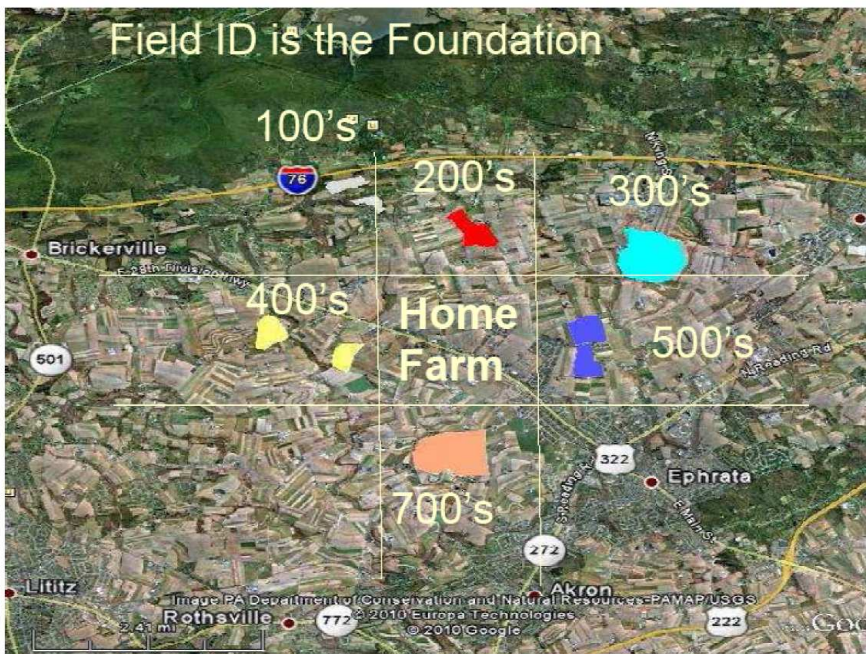
Some farms only want to work with the basics, such as keeping track of the ground they are farming, planning their rotations and recording what they actually plant. Others may want detailed records of each treatment and action they take on a field. While one farm is tracking their chemical history another farm might only want to track the crop and manure applications. Whatever the interest, the field history page can show the current growing year history, or everything that has ever been recorded for a given field. Additional filters help you zoom in on particular operations and/or products across all fields.

2009 Fields -> Field History										
Field Status			Operation Type Filter		Product Filter		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Current Growing Year <input type="radio"/> All Growing Years			
Search for Field: 162			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Field	Location	GY	Date	Oper Type	Product	Rate	Units	Acres	PI #	Status Description
▶ 162		2009	04/27/09	CP	AAtrex 4L		0 Pts/Acre			
162		2009	04/27/09	CP	Lumax		0 Qts/Acre			
162		2009	04/27/09	Fert	Nytan	8.5	Gals/Acre	25.0		
162		2009	04/27/09	Plant	Corn Silage		0 Plants/Acr	25.0		32T85
162		2009	04/03/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	3	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	04/02/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	5	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	03/13/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	2	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	03/03/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	2	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	02/11/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	2	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	02/10/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	3	Loads/Field			Diller Tank
162		2009	02/09/09	Manure	Liquid-Main Farm	2	Loads/Field			Diller Tank

Field ID - A Big Deal

It is getting more complicated to farm. At some point information management becomes a bottleneck and growers want to use their PC's and software to make better decisions with more comprehensive history. But in order to use software efficiently they need a thrifty field identification (ID) system - and the best for entering information quickly and moving through the software efficiently, are numbers. Few farms use numbers for identifying their fields and are as excited about changing their field ID as they are pulling out a finger nail. So they get stuck and the bottleneck remains.

While the Fields and Crops Manager program can work with any sort of field ID "Think hard about your field ID before starting any program" according to Jack van Almelo, the software development team leader. "If you have been through systemizing your cow records with software you know that a simple numeric system is the easiest to work with. We think the same is true for fields."



There are many different ways to think about numbering your fields. This example allows for assigning a number series based on relative direction from "home". If there are just three fields North of home there would be three fields in the 200 series. While a good ID system still is no replacement for a good set of farm maps, a system such as this makes it easy for staff to approximate the location of fields. It also allows plenty of room for adding fields without breaking your ID system. As an example, if the farm above picks up some fields further North of the 200 series fields, they could assign them a 2200 series.

A new report is available in Fields and Crops - the Manure Spreading Work Order

If the farm's Annual CAFO plan is created by a planner that runs the planner's companion software "Fields and Crops Advisor" this report will tell the user how much manure they can apply and those amounts are updated as the farm records their manure applications. To create a manure spreading work order the user selects the product (manure) that they are going to apply, the spreader they are going to use, the fields they want to spread, and then sets a default rate for spreading. Once in the "grid", the user can key in different rates to apply before printing.

Manure Work Order							Work Order Date:
Spreader: Diller Tank		Liquid-Main Farm					11/28/2009
Load Size: 6.3 KGals		Winter Broadcast					
Field/Section(s) Crop(s)	*	Acres	Max	Application Rate		Total	Loads
			KGals/Acre	KGals/Acre	Loads/Acre	Loads	
401 / Con Stage	*	6.1	12.00	6.00	0.95	5.81	
402 / Con Stage	*	13.7	14.00	6.00	0.95	13.05	
403 / Con Stage	*	15.0	12.00	6.00	0.95	14.29	
404 / Con Stage	*	11.8	17.00	6.00	0.95	11.24	
451 /A Con Stage	*	21.2	10.00	6.00	0.95	20.19	

The final report allows for the applicator to record the loads they applied to each field.

Internet Based

Fields and Crops Manager is an internet based program which means a farm will need internet access faster than traditional dial-up. It also means that the farm's data is kept offsite and backed up automatically and that users do not have to bother with putting software updates in their own PC, as they will always be running the latest version.

Fields and Crops Manager is sold and supported by Farmland Environmental. For more information call 1-800-540-8716 or email: jack.vanalmelo@farmlandenvironmental.com or dani.thon@farmlandenvironmental.com.