



Agrisoft Systems NEWSLETTER

Thirty-fifth edition, Oct.— Dec. 2020

Message from the Management

A look back at 2020 and outlook for the coming year

Dear Customers and Friends,

On behalf of the Agrisoft Systems team I would like to wish you all a happy, successful and above all healthy and safe new year 2021! In this edition of the newsletter, we take a look back at the most important things that happened at Agrisoft Systems in the past year and present some of our ideas and plans for 2021.

The year 2020 was shaped above everything else by the coronavirus pandemic that has affected practically the entire world in some way, and of course we at Agrisoft Systems are no exception. Although we have been lucky enough to have had no Covid cases in our team so far, our office has been closed and the entire team has been working from home since March. As an IT company we have been lucky in that it has been relatively easy to be proactive about this and implement the work from home policy from an early date, without too much impact on our programming activities. Due to our very distributed customer base located all over the world, we also already routinely carried out practically all customer service activities ranging from product presentations over technical support to software training for new installations in a remote manner. This experience has stood us in good stead and allowed us to carry on most of our activities without too many problems due to travel and contact restrictions. While the road back to normality is clearly a long one, we are very hopeful that the newly commenced Covid vaccinations will lead to things improving sooner rather than later and make 2021 a better year for everyone.

Despite the difficult circumstances, OMP development reached a major milestone in 2020 with

the release of OMP version 10.0 in June. In terms of new features added and technical changes, this release is probably the biggest single step in the last twenty years of OMP evolution and marked the culmination of almost two years of development time. In particular the switch to an SQL Server back-end database was essential to future-proof OMP with regards to ever larger and more detailed data sets. It also opens up many new technical possibilities and improves the performance of OMP in multi user settings. The new version also includes a large number of new features and usability improvements, ranging from an improved mechanism for the global filter over the ability to export any data analysis form's data to Excel up to several new forms and reports. The entire short term forecasting calculations within the OMP BBC add-in were also rewritten to provide additional flexibility. For a more detailed discussion of all the changes and improvements in OMP 10.0 please refer to the dedicated article in the June edition of this newsletter, or the What's new documents that were distributed as part of the upgrade process.



Due to the significant changes in the technical foundations of OMP, the new version requires a completely new installation process as well as a dedicated data migration process to transfer existing OMP data from the OMP 9.3 data files into the new SQL Server database. This meant that the upgrade process was on the face of it far more complicated for users to carry out than



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previous OMP version updates. In particular, OMP 10.0 has several additional prerequisites in terms of software that needs to be installed in order to run OMP. First and foremost this includes SQL Server itself, which is a relatively complicated program to install and configure correctly. In anticipation of this, we had put a lot of work into developing a simple and powerful new installation wizard, which would handle most of the configuration issues and guide users through the installation and data migration in a straightforward and clear manner. The work we put in paid off massively when the coronavirus restrictions made any kind of in-person site visit impossible and we had to use remote tools to help our customers with the upgrade. Overall, we are extremely happy with how smoothly the upgrade has gone for our MUA customers, despite the large changes. The uptake of the new version has also generally been very good, with practically all of our MUA customers already making the switch to OMP 10.0.

In the second half of 2020, we have started working on a number of new improvements within OMP for the next version update. The big-

gest change that we have planned for OMP 10.1 is the addition of a whole new standalone GIS mapping module. This new OMP-GIS application will cover all the capabilities of previous versions of OMP-GIS, but with the crucial difference that it is a standalone application and does not require MapInfo or ArcGIS as a host application. This difference is a real game-changer due to the relatively high additional costs associated with the GIS host software. In many cases, these costs meant that within a given plantation OMP-GIS is only used by a designated GIS operator who is responsible for circulating thematic GIS maps. Clearly, making it possible for every OMP user including plantation managers and agronomists to generate and analyze thematic GIS maps will massively enhance the usefulness of this tool. The new OMP-GIS application also adds a few features that were not available in previous OMP-GIS releases, such as mapping of OMP-FS point data collected with the survey app. This opens up many interesting possibilities, for example printing off palm-level point maps showing the location of diseased palms for field teams to find and implement corrective measures. Besides the new GIS module, we are putting a particular fo-





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cus on implementing various smaller changes and improvements that were requested by our customers over the last two years. These range from new fields in the Oilpalm table over additional grouping options on some forms and reports, to the possibility of recording block area and area in yield changes on a monthly level.

For the upcoming year, initially our main priority will be on finishing up the new OMP-GIS application and preparing the OMP 10.1 release. Within the context of the main OMP program the biggest change will be the introduction of a dedicated field for “area in yield” and the possibility of recording monthly changes in the areas. The FFB yield in t/ha is one of the most important parameters for any oil palm plantation. While the nominator is at least conceptually straightforward as the total weight of all harvested fruit, the area to use in the denominator is more contentious. While some agronomists advocate the use of the total block area independent of the actual palm stand, some users prefer to use an effective “mature area” based on the census count of mature palms. However, the accuracy of this approach is limited by how often you can feasibly carry out a palm census and furthermore it can

obscure low yields resulting from an incomplete palm stand. In order to provide more flexibility, in the future we will allow users to specifically enter the “area in yield” to be used for yield calculations. Furthermore, it will be possible to specify changes in the total block area and the area in yield on a monthly basis. In this way, users have the full control over which part of a block they want to count as in production at any given time. In particular, this even makes it possible to handle more complicated cases such as replanting a block in the middle of the year, or a situation where a part of a block is temporarily out of production due to flooding. Moving forward, the next major project on our to do list is a field work module for more detailed planning and recording of all kinds of field work tasks together with the materials, fuels and tools used. Overall, we look forward to pushing on with the development of new OMP features now that we have the major milestone of the SQL Server migration behind us.

Yours sincerely,

Max Kerstan





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From the developers desk

A selection of the on-going developments and plans which are part of our constant efforts to continue to improve Agrisoft products.

OMP-DBMS

- Block-level field for general harvest method used in this block
- Data analysis of productivity by harvest method
- Additional grouping level on monthly round lengths form
- Flexible filtering system with option to choose fields to include in filter
- Improved and more finely-grained data recalculation system
- Rule-based system for block-specific maturity ages
- New data analysis form for monthly block growth status and areas
- Additional grouping options on monthly fertilizer recommendation vs actual
- New and improved layout of block details form
- Streamlined system settings for yield calculation

OMP-GIS

- Completely new standalone thematic mapping application
- Independent of GIS host programs like ArcGIS and MapInfo
- C# application compatible with any normal Windows host
- Improved handling and management of yearly base maps
- Mapping using user-defined thematic ranges for all numeric parameters
- Point maps for geo-referenced OMP Field Survey results
- Continued support for custom background layers and exporting to PDF or Google Earth
- Cover all features of previous OMP-GIS, including multi-map layouts

Monthly areas and area in yield

- Dedicated field for “area in yield” for yield calculations
- Recording of block areas and palm census changes on a monthly basis
- Separate recording of high conservation value (HCV) areas
- Increased accuracy in all yield calculations on a monthly basis
- Better reporting of estate areas and areas in yield on a month-by-month basis
- Easier and more accurate handling of situations where blocks come into production or are replanted