Agrisoft Systems
NEWSLETTER
Forty-third edition, Oct.— Dec. 2022

Message from the Management

A look back at 2022 and outlook for the coming year

Dear Customers and Friends,

First of all, I would like to wish you all the best for the new year on behalf of the entire Agrisoft Systems team. As usual in our year's end 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 2023.

The last year saw the roll-out of two new versions of OMP Plantation. Version 10.1 was initially released right at the end of 2021 and was then rolled out to our MUA (maintenance agreement) customers over first few weeks of 2022. The major new feature in this release was a completely new standalone OMP-GIS application for thematic mapping, independent of any third-party host application. The new OMP-GIS module has already proven to be an extremely useful addition to the OMP Plantation data analysis and reporting tools, by making thematic mapping and spatial analysis much more accessible for all OMP users and not only dedicated GIS specialists. Another big improvement in OMP-GIS 10.1 is the built-in support for mapping of geo-coded point-level data from OMP Field Survey. Apart from the GIS module, OMP Plantation 10.1 introduced big changes with regards to the recording of block areas and palm counts. Changes in any of these quantities can now be recorded on a monthly basis rather than just by year. Furthermore, the area in yield can now be entered explicitly for each block. This provides far more flexibility to accurately calculate yields in situations where the area in yield changes from one month to the next, for example as old blocks are replanted or immature blocks start coming into production.

The next major release came in June 2022 with OMP Plantation version 10.2. The most important addition in this release was a completely new form and report that allows users to compare various factors between the best and worst block for a given year in order to better understand why some blocks are performing better than others. OMP Plantation 10.2 also gives users the option to ignore fertilizer applications during nutrient calculations which covers situations where fertilizer applications have failed in some way. Another feature adds more flexibility during data entry by allowing users to input "null" values for the puScore in cases where a parameter was not surveyed, to avoid distorting average scores at higher spatial levels. Finally, a new field was added to the soil analysis section for the soil total P.

In the past year we noticed a continuation of the trend that more and more of our customers, particularly larger groups with multiple plantations in different locations, try to consolidate their OMP installation in a central database server. This means that OMP is no longer installed on the personal computers of multiple users. Instead, the OMP database is hosted on a central server that can be accessed by multiple people via a virtual desktop interface. The great ad-

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vantage of this setup is that every user will always see the latest available data and there is no requirement for data entry personnel to explicitly share an updated database with all the data analysis users. Furthermore, a centralized installation of this type is much easier to administer for the IT department, as database back-ups and program updates only need to be applied in one place. Having all the OMP databases from the different plantation sites hosted on the same database server also makes it possible to use the OMP group tool to view reports aggregated to group level. Throughout the year we have been working with various customers to set up this type of OMP system.

Several of our version and patch releases in 2022 have included tweaks and improvements to the group tool and the OMP application logic to make it easier to install and maintain the program in the kind of multi-user group level installation described above. In the second half of the year we have been working on the next step in this direction, by providing the option of installing a multi-estate OMP “instance”. Up to now, an OMP installation has always been linked with a single OMP estate license. This means that for example a group with 5 distinct plantations would typically have 6 separate OMP installations (one per plantation plus the group tool). IT administrators would have to apply version updates and patches as well as maintaining user shortcuts for each installation separately. In many cases, there is a further multiplication as the virtual desktop system actually consists of multiple servers in order to distribute the load of the active users, and the OMP installations are duplicated on each server in the server farm. The new instance-based installation aims to reduce the workload for the IT department in these kinds of situations as it will be possible to run a single OMP installation with a license file that contains the licenses for multiple estates plus the group license. This means that there is just one OMP installation required per server, even in groups with multiple OMP licenses. In this case, users who open OMP will be able to choose the estate they wish to work with at runtime.

Apart from this, in the second half of the year we have been mainly working on two major topics. The first is the OMP BBC module for short term crop forecasting based on black bunch counts. We are implementing major changes to the way data on forecast assumptions can be entered in the program. This includes a revamped data entry form for the actual black bunch count data and a modernized interface for importing from Excel. On a more fundamental level, it will now be possible to enter and edit the forecast average bunch weight for every individual block and month. This is in contrast to previous versions of OMP BBC, where the program would automatically evaluate the forecast ABW from historical production data. The new system provides far greater flexibility to account for outliers or cases where e.g. errors in historical ABW data would otherwise distort the production forecast. Of course, it is still possible to let OMP BBC calculate the forecast ABW for you based on the historical data if so desired, but this is now done in a more controlled, explicit manner and it is easily possible to tweak the ABW values for individual blocks and months. Another major change in BBC is that it will now be possible to define multiple different sets of monthly distribution percentages for your plantation. You can define your own rules to decide when which distribution should apply, for example for certain divisions, palm ages or planting materials.

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The other main topic is the new field work and resource use module that we are planning to implement. In this context, we have started implementing some of the fundamental features, in particular related to the picker and job definitions. Two important regular field work jobs are application of fertilizers and herbicides, which should of course be covered by the new field work module. It has already been possible to record fertilizer and pesticide recommendation and application data per block and month since many versions of OMP. Pesticide data has previously been recorded in the OMP PM add-in program. In order to allow integration of this existing data into the new field work module in the future, we have decided to integrate the pesticide data into the main OMP DBMS application while streamlining the data structure as required. At the same time, we have taken the opportunity to redesign and recode all the pesticide data analysis forms, reports and charts. This provides a massive step forward compared to the old OMP PM add-in both in terms of flexibility and options as well as speed.

A particularly pleasing development in 2022 was that with a fully vaccinated staff and receding level of infections, we were finally able to re-open our office after our entire staff had been working from home for the majority of the first years of the Covid pandemic. The team is happy that a semblance -of normality has returned to our working routines, and in-person discussions and meetings are once again possible. 2022 has also been a successful year for Agrisoft in terms of license area increases, with over 45,000 ha of new OMP license area added in particular in Latin America and Africa.

For the upcoming year, our first aim will be to finish the OMP Plantation 10.3 release, which will contain amongst other improvements the changes mentioned above that we have been working on in the second half of 2022. The development team is finishing up the final implementation tasks that are scheduled for this release and are almost ready to start the final release testing stage. Therefore, we hope to be able to release version 10.3 in February. Alongside and after this, we will look to push through the remainder of the field work and resource use module. As usual, a selection of some of the things in the to-do pipeline can be found in the section “From the developer’s desk” at the end of this newsletter.

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.

Field work and resource use

- Budgeting for regular field work tasks like weeding, pruning, fertilizer application etc.
- Flexible definition of jobs with expected rates of usage of resources like fuel, equipment, material and labor
- Scheduling wizard to generate field work budget based on desired number of rounds and total area to cover in one cycle
- Recording of actual areas covered by job, block and date and comparison vs budget
- Recording of actual resource use and comparison vs budget
- Integration of fertilizer and pesticide ap-

Instance-based installation

- Cover multiple OMP estate licenses with a single setup/installation
- Launch either normal OMP or the OMP Group Tool
- Support for installing multiple OMP instances with different configurations of estates on the same machine
- Integration with multi-user logic, so that IT administrators will only need to run one OMP installer even in a situation with multiple estates and multiple users on a central server
- Migration of user settings from multiple existing OMP Plantation 10.2 installations into a multi-estate instance installation

Query writer add-in

- Completely new add-in for writing, saving and executing custom SQL queries
- No need to create any additional user logins on the SQL Server to run custom queries
- No conflict with server security policies even if the SQL Server is hosted on a central server
- Query writing is password-protected by default, so will be available only to explicitly authorized users
- Authorization for query writing can be handled by the OMP operator without requiring input from IT team