OAKLAND Agri-Business Accounting Solutions

connecting your business together

Excellence, Integrity, and SERVICE

By John Lounsberry, Client Services Manager, jlounsberry@oaklandcorp.com

Oakland's mission statement is a very simple, straightforward message. You will find it in this newsletter. You will find it throughout our office. A copy of it hangs above my desk. This simple message has been the foundation of this company for our 20 years of existence. As manager of Client Services, it is my commitment to each of you.

We are not your typical Client Services Department and we don't want to be. We are committed to be the best Client Services Department of **any** vendor, in **any** business you deal with. Our staff makes that possible. Within our software support staff, you will find a former General Manager, Controller, Grain Accounting Specialist, and an Accounting Specialist, with an average of over 15 years experience each in the same businesses we serve. What this offers our clients is someone who not only understands the software, but also understands your business.

We have begun a cross-training program for all of our support staff. This program is a point of emphasis for the Client Service Department staff. This will expand the level of service to our clients and also expand the level of expertise of our support staff.

To our current clients, thank you for making Oakland what it is today. The enhancements and development of our software over the years comes from a valued partnership of communicating and developing ideas in a rapid-change business. If this is your first introduction to Oakland software, we appreciate your interest and offer you the same commitment—excellence, integrity, and service.■

Oakland Corporation, and each of us, commit to Excellence, Integrity, and Service understanding that happiness comes not from wealth, recognition, or achievement, but from fulfillment of God's purpose.

Fuel Manager Takes Point-Of-Sale Software on the Road

By Dan Oakland, Software Development, doakland@oaklandcorp.com

The *Fuel Manager* module is designed to streamline your energy division's scheduling, delivery, billing, and maintenance routines; featuring seamless integration from the office to the point-of-delivery and back again. *Fuel Manager* was designed in three separate stages, and we're pleased to announce that the final stage — on-the-truck point-of-sale — is up, running, and proving it can work in the "real world," as eastern Iowa's River Valley Cooperative becomes our first client to use this new software product.

Stage III of *Fuel Manager* is a Java™-based application that runs on either a laptop or handheld device carried in the fuel truck. Sun Microsystems' Java Runtime Environment is a relatively new technology that is commonly used in Internet-based and distributed networking applications. While the day-to-day mechanics of how often updates are made available to drivers, as well as how often the drivers submit their delivery information for billing is entirely up to you. An example of the process is as follows:

1. In the office, an employee with access to the Oakland system runs a delivery schedule/forecast update on the server. This process takes a company-wide snapshot of all customer records (including current credit levels and contracts), tank information, product files, and other necessary data. In addition, orders for fuel based on degree-day calculations can be created and made available. Program updates and patches also occur during this process, meaning that there's no need to manually update each laptop every time our software changes. Fuel truck drivers, via external (i.e. dial up) or office LAN connections, grab the latest updates from the server in a matter of minutes (depending on the connection speed, the number of customers, and whether program updates exist).

2. Drivers then go about their business accessing *Fuel Manager's* user-friendly POS application to record deliveries throughout the day and print point-of-sale or point-of-delivery tickets on the spot. Metered tickets are possible for trucks with Liquid Controls LectroCount™ Registers (LCRs) onboard

their trucks. Metered ticket integration is also available for trucks with MID:COM 8000 meters using MID:COM's own on-the-truck solution.

3. At the end of the day, the driver returns to the office – or anywhere he can connect to your local network – and submits his deliveries for processing. Sending delivery information from the laptop to the server, in most cases, takes a matter of seconds. Invoices can then be created for those deliveries automatically, avoiding any need for data entry in the office. That night, early the next morning, or whenever you wish, the process repeats itself: it's entirely up to you.

The underlying principle behind our on-the-truck software is that it's a recording device — not a stand-alone solution. As such, it allows fuel truck operators to do their jobs without having to deal with the complexity of maintaining an entire accounting system. *Fuel Manager* is available now — please contact our marketing department at *marketing@oaklandcorp.com* or call 800-383-5114 for more information! ∎

E-Mail Virus Control and More

By John "Mogy" Mogren, IT Client Services Director, mogy@oaklandcorp.com

E-Mail Viruses and Spam are hot topics, and we've had many requests to offer extensive protection against them.

We must begin by reminding users of the importance of running a current version of an Anti-virus program. Two of the most popular are *Norton AntiVirus*,® and *McAfee Virus Scan*®. In order for these programs to work efficiently, we must also remember to update these programs as new viruses emerge.

As requested, **Oakland** is going one step further. We are in the process of developing a new server that will assist in blocking unwanted e-Mails. This new

product is called a **Filter** server.

Filter Server

In order to give our readers an idea of how this product protects your valuable information from e-Mail viruses, let's look at a comparison.

Without Filter Server (Assuming user has *current* virus protection)

- E-Mail received contains a known virus.
- Anti-virus program recognizes this and alerts you.
- User takes the necessary steps the anti-virus suggests to eliminate the virus.
- User's PC continues to work as normal.

Again, this assumes the user has been diligent in updating their anti-virus software.
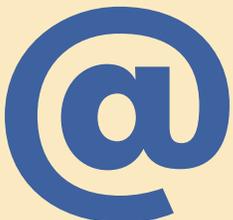
Updated Grain Manager Software Saves Time, Effort

By (from left to right) Robb McMullen, director of software development; Larry Young, grain & fertilizer software installer; Shirley Becker, grain software support

There are 15 new reasons to like **Oakland**'s Grain Manager software.

We've been updating many of our customers' Grain Manager software to Version 4 during the past nine months. We've included lots of helpful new features and changes we know you'll like.

Printing to the screen is one of the biggest changes you'll notice. And don't worry—it's not hard to learn these new tools.

The menu is almost exactly the same as before. Things may look a little different, but if you read the prompts, they'll walk you through. We've also incorporated a help key in nearly every field.

New features for Grain Manager include:

1. **Onscreen reports**, which mean less reliance on printing.

2. An **exact reprint** of settlements.

3. **Drill-down views** of the daily position report (DPR) and the long and short. You can see all the detail without having to run a separate report.

4. **More options for the contract reports**, including different sort options and ways you can print some of the items.

5. Ability to run a **sequencing report**. (This is like a diary of the settlement activity.)

6. **Pop-up notification** that you can turn on and off. This allows you to put in any message you want. For example, if Joe Jones has an FSA loan and you include this in a pop-up notification, this message will show up any time Joe's name is entered.

7. **A simplified system** for the multiple settlement process.

8. **Time stamping** for all documents. If you've printed three copies of a document during the last 24 hours, the time stamp helps you spot the most recent version.

9. **An onscreen comparison** of general ledger balances to DPR balances.

10. **Maintenance that can be set up by location.** If you have different discount schedules at your different branches, the software can accommodate that.

11. **A simplified monthly shrink process.** What used to take two hours for some of our clients now takes closer to two minutes.

12. **Streamlined accruing and billing of storage.** You won't have to accrue and then do a bill step, because these are now tied together. No more running a different report and a different billing step for each different commodity, receipt type, location, and tariff or storage type. Now it's much easier to get the reports you want to look at.

13. **A simplified unsettling process.** When there's an error, it's easier than ever to fix those mistakes.

14. **An improved settle-available function.** You can make a settlement from here, and you can also create test settlements.

15. **A better way to see which locations have and haven't changed their date**. If you're combining reports across locations, it's very important that they are all on the same date. This tool helps you do this.

Responding to you

These updates were based on your requests. We've worked hard to streamline and coordinate the whole system, so it's easier for you to use.

This program also offers a lot more flexibility behind the scenes for maintenance and support. We've received a lot of positive feedback so far. If you have questions about your Grain Manager software, please contact Oakland. We'll be glad to help. ∎

In the event the software is not up-to-date, the following:
- E-Mail received contains a known virus.
- Anti-virus program does not recognize the e-Mail as a threat.
- Allows user to download e-Mail.
- Virus invades PC causing . . .who only knows.

With Filter Server
- E-Mail is sent to recipient.
- Filter server checks the message for virus before ever being sent to individual PC.

If the e-Mail *does* contain a known virus, the server will reject the e-Mail and return it to the sender, not allowing the e-Mail to reach the recipient.

There's *no* solution that can protect 100% from SPAM, viruses and other unwanted e-Mail. Using a Filter server, however, can help tremendously.

Even if your e-Mail is provided by services other than Oakland, the product can be utilized.

If you have questions or you would like to learn more about this product. Please call 800-733-0676 option 3 or send me an e-Mail at *mogy@oaklandcorp.com*. Don't forget to ask about how this Filter server can control your population of SPAM! ∎

From The Back Office: "Working for the Future!"

By Chuck Carlson, vice president and COO, ccarlson@oaklandcorp.com

Who is Oakland?

Oakland is a computer company in the heart of farm country in Story City, Iowa. We've been serving Agribusinesses, just like yours, since 1983. If you know us, you know the Oakland Client Services Staff is here to help you through your workday, weeknights or weekends. Many of you have told us, *"We consider Oakland as a Partner in our Business!"* That statement is a Compliment, a Responsibility, and a Challenge for Oakland Client Services to continuously improve our products and services for the future.

Experience

At Oakland, we believe that the most valuable service we give is Experience. *The majority of our first line Support Staff in Client Services have previous experience as a Controller, General Manager, or Grain Merchandiser in an Agribusiness environment.* So, when you call into our Support Line (800-733-0676), you will be speaking with a person that has done what you're doing and speaks your language.

Communication

This newsletter is one example of how Oakland is continuing to improve our service and communication with our clients. In fact, Oakland is working on many new ways to communicate with our clients. For example, we are currently in the process of updating our website *www.oaklandcorp.com*. Users will have access to additional training materials and process instructions for clients to use to better manage and operate their business. We are utilizing e-Mail to send communications quickly and more frequently. In addition, Oakland will be requesting information from our clients through e-Mail surveys and questionnaires. These have been designed to help Oakland better understand *your* specific business, *your* current and future needs, most importantly, where do you

want to go with *your* future. Another exciting feature we will be implementing in the next few months is an e-Mailed response to the client-driven requests called the *Software Request Status Report.*

New Products now Available

Oakland has recently implemented several new products in both hardware and software. Please contact our Support Line for additional questions on how these new products work, or contact our Sales and Marketing Department for pricing at 800-383-5114.

These products include:
- VPN and VIP Administration
- E-Mail Administration
- E-Mail Spam & Virus Filtering
- E-Mail Customer Statements
- AR Budget Billing
- AR Dunning Manager
- Report transfer to Microsoft, Word or Excel
- Integrated Grain Scale Total Solution
- Commodity Manager (Non-Grain)
- Live Commodity Bids & Integration to "Grain Manager"
- Degree Day and Fuel Tank Management System
- Fuel Truck Point-of-Sale including Bookings
- Integration to MID:COM 8000, Fuel Delivery

Products for the Future

Current items that Oakland is working on for the future are:
- ACH for Grain, Accounts Payable, & Patronage
- ACH Inbound
- Paperless Office – (to file as little paper as *you* want)
- Handheld unit with scanner to track inventory

As you can see, Oakland is busy *"Working for the Future"* for our clients and future clients. We understand the business because we've lived it. We have the knowledge, capability, and commitment to take our clients into the future. ■

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Inside this Issue:

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