



Case Study



The Time Is Ripe For Mobile Printing In The Field

Citrus Growers Boost Productivity With Printek Mt3-II Printers



One of the least likely places you'd expect to find a mobile computing and printing solution is in the orange groves of Florida, yet GeoAg Solutions and Printek have teamed up to deliver a system that greatly enhances the productivity of major orange growers. The next time you eat an orange or

have a glass of orange juice, you'll know now that GeoAg and Printek probably helped to deliver it to you.

GeoAg Solutions, a division of UAP (United Agri Products) based in Lehigh Acres, FL, provides data collection, analysis, and custom solution development for many types of agriculture operations, specializing in Florida citrus. The company has pioneered many of the data collection methods and technologies used for precision agriculture in the citrus industry today. GeoAg's services include: geo-referenced mapping; yield data collection and analysis; remote harvest monitoring; farm labor tracking; and on farm record keeping.

One of the productivity tools GeoAg offers is a software module called HarvestPay that enables users to log precise work hours in the field on a mobile computing system, eliminating the inefficiency of time sheets and punch cards. HarvestPay reduces redundant data entry, improves the accuracy of payroll and provides links to other productivity analysis tools offered by GeoAg.

An important element of the HarvestPay solution is the Mt3-II mobile printer from Printek. Citrus harvesters use Mt3-II printers to print work receipt tickets and summary reports in the field. This printing capability gives the field workers hard copy confirmation of their wages and enables supervisors to better track the daily productivity of their crews.

As you can imagine, the environment in the orange groves is demanding. The heat, humidity and dust would render most computer equipment useless. To successfully combat the elements, GeoAg offers a customized, highly ruggedized tablet computer called the GEOMAX XRT that runs on a Windows XP operating system. The tablet computers are mounted on harvesting equipment and driven through the citrus groves. The GEOMAX XRT uses GPS technology to map crop yield locations - data that is valuable for planning fertilization schedules. Integrated Cingular Wireless network cards provide wireless data transmission from the field to the office or other remote locations.

Each time a field worker completes a bin of picked oranges, a supervisor records it on the computer. Supervisors are typically responsible for crews of 20 to 30 workers. Using Printek Mt3-II printers, the supervisors provide field workers with daily work receipts and print out summary reports of each crews' work at the end of each day. Data is uploaded wirelessly to HarvestPay for payroll administration. The Printek Mt3-II printers are usually kept in environmental cases when not in use, but still are subject to difficult demands.

According to GeoAg's Manager, Neal Horrom, "The Mt3-II printers are working like champs under these harsh conditions. The printers are mistreated and thrown around and continue to perform." Horrom adds that battery life has been "excellent" and by using the auto-power off option, some workers recharge their printers only once a week. "Print speed is fast and our customers are very pleased with overall performance of the Printek printers."



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