

Automated Crop Reporting Questions & Answers



John Deere is improving how producers report field data for crop insurance purposes. The Automated Crop Reporting process provides a simpler, more accurate way to track field data for a time-consuming task: government reporting.

As a producer, you may have questions about details surrounding this new process. This document is intended to answer the more frequently asked questions.

Preparation / Getting Started

1. What is Automated Crop Reporting and how does it affect me?

- a. The basic premise of the Automated Crop Reporting process starts by using the information you already collect from your precision farming system. It benefits you by maximizing your precision farming technology investment, reducing the amount of time to certify acres and generating more accurate acreage and production reports. Combined, these benefits return much-needed time and more accurate field data to producers, allowing you to focus on growing your farming operation.

2. What are the steps I need to follow to start working with Automated Crop Reporting?

- a. Work with your local John Deere dealer to set up your precision farming system (such as GreenStar™); and your John Deere crop insurance agency to confirm the best set-up of your farms and fields in your farm mapping software (such as Apex™)
- b. Once your precision farming system is set up, you can document planting and harvest activity while you operate your equipment in the field.
- c. Unload planting and harvest data from the system's data card to your farm management software (such as Apex™ or SMS™ from Ag Leader®).
- d. Review your field data in your farm management software. Then, (if you're working with Apex) use GSDNet™ — a secure Internet gateway that transfers information to and from Apex — to send only the information your John Deere crop insurance agent needs for crop insurance reporting. If you're using Ag Leader's SMS, you can export the data to a CD or flash drive and give it to your agency.

- e. Your agent will prepare acreage and production reports for your review and signature. Then, the agent can also generate an “FSA Acreage Summary Report” to help make crop reporting easier at the county FSA office.

3. What should I do to be sure data from my precision farming system can be used for policy reporting and claims?

- a. Acreage Reporting/Planting
 - i. Planting/Seeding data is logged to correct client, farm, and field for the crop and correct planting date.
 - ii. Information for any fields that were NOT logged with GPS is also indicated to the agent. This might include areas where a Prevented Planting claim may be submitted, or small areas where a skip in planting pattern is to still be considered as planted to the crop.
 - iii. Implement overlap has been accounted for using appropriate settings on your GPS Display.
- b. Production Reporting/Harvest
 - i. Correctly calibrate your yield monitor. See Recommendations
 - ii. Keep a calibration log each time you calibrate your yield monitor sensors in accordance with the system manufacturer’s guidelines
 - iii. Yield map must represent accurate and complete production (map may also utilize post-harvest calibration but will require additional records)
- c. Be sure to keep precision farming data and paper records for BOTH planting and harvest to minimize effort and simplify division of totals to fit crop insurance unit structure and crop share.

4. What precision farming systems are compatible with the Automated Crop Reporting process?

- a. John Deere’s GreenStar system and Apex Farm Management software is the preferred precision farming system for ACR because you can use GSDNet to electronically transfer your precision farming information directly to your John Deere insurance agency using the Internet.
- b. SMS™ from Ag Leader® is also compatible. Using SMS will require the producer to export the precision farming information to a CD or flash drive and deliver that media to the John Deere insurance agency. You can find instructions for this process by contacting your John Deere insurance agency. Ag Leader’s SMS software also processes field data collected on many different in-cab displays. Please refer to Ag Leader’s website for a complete listing.

5. What happens if I overlap rows I’ve already planted/harvested? Will I record more acres than I’ve actually planted or will my yield be affected?

- a. Since machine and implement overlap often occurs during normal field operations many precision farming systems allow the display to be configured to account for any additional system calculated crop area due to this occurrence. As an added benefit to John Deere crop insurance customers, your John Deere crop insurance agency has software that will account for this overlap and make necessary adjustments to comply with crop insurance guidelines. When this occurs, it is possible that crop area

totals may be slightly different than those of the farm mapping software or displayed on the system's monitor.

6. Can APEX merge data between two combines that both have monitors?

- a. Yes. You can unload multiple GreenStar data cards into APEX that documented any operation, seeding or harvesting. As long as the proper Client, Farm & Field selections were entered by the machine operators on various equipment, the data is easily integrated during the Unload Card process.

Incomplete information

1. I'd like to use Apex to send my harvest information to my insurance agency, but I don't think the mass flow sensor is accurate. What now?

- a. Contact your equipment and/or precision farming system dealer prior to harvest. They should be able to assist you with information and resources to help set up and operate your combine and monitor to create accurate yield maps. They should also be able to assist you in maintenance and repair of the system's components. Also, please read and follow the simple guidelines available at www.AutomatedCropReporting.com. You may also be able to utilize a process called "post harvest calibration" on your yield map as long as you have acceptable records to document the changes you've made. If however, the final yield map you create does not reflect the field total you know to be accurate, then submit production records that indicate and detail the crop production total.

2. What happens if some of my planting data is incomplete due to lack of precision farming technology on all my equipment or spotty GPS coverage?

- a. For any missing field data, you must supply additional records for areas that were not covered by equipment with precision farming systems. These additional records must indicate the information (production or crop area) from only those areas that were NOT covered by precision farming data. For instance, if only ½ of a field's production was indicated in a yield map, then scale tickets or storage bin measurements would need to indicate the production from only the portion of the field not covered in the yield map. If records only exist for the entire field and not just the unmonitored area, then it will be necessary to have total farm production records which will then be allocated appropriately.

Recordkeeping

1. Now that I can use my precision farming records for crop reporting, can I throw away all my paper records such as scale tickets or bin measurements?

- a. No, you should not discard any paper records as they are useful information for other farm management decisions. Also, if the precision farming records

are suspected to be inaccurate due to calibration, missing data, etc, you may need to supply the adjuster with your paper records to resolve any questions. One might compare this approach to recordkeeping practices when electronically filing taxes with the IRS each year. Even though many of the paper documents are never sent to the IRS the tax payer is still required to keep records for the required period in the event of an audit.

Calibration

1. What calibration activities are required for calibrating the GreenStar yield monitor system?

- a. GreenStar system display (Original “brown box”, GS2, or GS3)
 - i. standard calibration
 - ii. a low flow calibration
 - iii. moisture sensor calibration

2. Where do I find resources to help me calibrate my yield monitor system?

- a. **John Deere dealership** – Talk to your dealer’s AMS consultant or other Service Department staff. You may wish to purchase a support agreement to assist in routine performance of these tasks.
- b. **Operators Manuals** –
 - i. GreenStar – Harvest Documentation
 - ii. Combine Manual – yield monitor and sensor calibration
- c. **Websites**
 - i. www.stellarsupport.com
 - ii. [calibration recommendations on www.AutomatedCropReporting.com](http://www.AutomatedCropReporting.com)

3. How often do I need to calibrate?

- a. Calibrating yield sensor: According to RMA (Risk Management Agency) rules, you must calibrate based on the owner’s manual recommendations. In the case of John Deere equipment, the owner’s manual suggests calibrating the mass flow sensor once per year for every crop harvested. However, to optimize accuracy, we suggest confirming the calibration as crop conditions change significantly during harvest season. For example, if you are harvesting in a field of corn yielding 200 bu/a after you calibrated the system when the crop was yielding 120; or when you’re in an area with crop at 25% moisture after you calibrated the system operating in crop with moisture at 18%. These wide variations in crop conditions would suggest a good opportunity to confirm the sensor calibrations.
- b. Calibrating maps (post-calibration): Post-calibration is done in the Farm Management Software, such as Apex. Since this activity cannot create yield data where harvest data from the system does NOT exist, the producer must keep in mind that additional, more traditional, production records (e.g. scale tickets, bin measurements, etc.) may be required to fully document crop production. In order for post-harvest calibration to be effective, the harvest

data must exist from the yield monitor along with acceptable records from scale tickets, bin measurements or feed records. Both methods of production records must be available to the claim adjuster if “post-harvest” calibrated yield maps are to be used.

4. What do I need to record for an “Annual Calibration Report”?

- a. A calibration report is necessary if you are using your precision farming system for policy or claim documentation. You may need to keep a hand-written log (captured during the time of calibration) that includes the following information in your tractor/combine:
 - i. Date and Time of the calibration
 - ii. Crop
 - iii. Crop Year
 - iv. Adjustment performed (weight entered into the display as indicated on the scale display or scale ticket). We would also suggest that the operator record a note that describes scale equipment was used (e.g. Auger Cart scale, grain elevator scale, seed dealer’s weigh-wagon scale, etc.)
 - v. System weight (the crop weight or volume the yield monitor measured during calibration)
 - vi. Adjustment Difference (the percentage difference between the yield monitor system generated measurement and that from the scales)
- b. Some mapping systems may also have the capability to generate this report from the data captured on the system. Please check with your precision farming system manufacturer to determine if this option is available on your system. You may also visit the ACR website to view an example report layout.

Claims

1. Can I use my precision farming information for claims?

- a. Yes, as long as your precision farming system meets the requirements of both the Crop Insurance Handbook (CIH) and Loss Adjustment Manual (LAM). Specifically, these are as follows –
 - i. GPS technology integrated with planter monitors, combine yield and moisture monitors, yield mapping software
 - ii. Planted acreage records must include:
 1. Insured’s name;
 2. Unit number;
 3. FSA farm/tract/field ID number (optional);
 4. Legal description of acreage
 5. Crop Name
 6. Crop area planted

- iii. Planting and harvesting summary reporting that reflects total harvested Production and also includes:
 - 1. Crop Name
 - 2. Harvested area
 - 3. Average crop moisture
 - 4. Insured's name;
 - 5. Unit number;
 - 6. FSA farm/tract/field ID number (optional);
 - 7. Legal description of acreage
- iv. Report indicating that system calibrations were performed per manufacturer's requirements
- v. Your John Deere crop insurance agency can give you more details

Resources for additional questions:

1. Automated Crop Reporting:

- a. <http://www.AutomatedCropReporting.com>

2. Apex and GreenStar:

- a. http://stellarsupport.deere.com/en_US_new/
- b. Call 888-GRN-STAR (888-476-7827)