



Industry Insight

Putting The Pro In Professional

by EMILY SHIELDS

There are several good horse farm software programs on the market, some which track veterinary work, others catalogue farm stock and still more deal with billing. However, farm managers and office staff across the country noticed one flaw in all of them: it took more than one program to effectively run the farm.

Rich Sulpizio, the owner of Magali Farms in Santa Ynez, brought up this problem to Norm Hanson, a software developer and his son-in-law. Two and a half years later, Alua Software released the Paddock Pro Horse Farm Management System, a brand new, all-encompassing software that removes the need for Microsoft Excel tables, sticky notes and yellow pads of paper.

Paddock Pro is a web-based software, meaning it is accessible anywhere that the subscriber has an internet connection, such as the farm office, at home, the airport or even in a coffee shop. Even without a computer, most cell phones these days, such as the iPhone, are made with full internet capabilities, meaning that one can check on the status of their farm using their phone no matter where they are located at the time.

Because the system is hosted on a server far removed from the user, Alua Software takes care of backing up the system and saving the information, removing that concern from the users. Web based applications act like web pages, so that if there is an update, the user simply sees it the next time they log in, meaning the hassle of downloading and installing an update is wiped out.

When the user logs in, they are greeted by the "Executive Dashboard," a screen that overviews the farm and gives not only horse count, a list of the day's scheduled activities such as veterinary and farrier appointments, a list of stallions and their mare bookings, but also a list of paddocks and barns which can be clicked on to locate a certain horse.

There is also a search bar where the user can quickly pull up the records for any horse or owner.

The horse screen displays the horse's pedigree, birth date and a photo, as well as owner information, the horse's location on the farm and any pertinent insurance information. Notes on the horse's arrival to the farm are easily accessed and edited.

"One of the best aspects of the program is the scheduling aspect," software developer and Alua Chief Operations Officer Matt Hamson explained. "It sends prompts and reminders about dates for new shoes and medication, and the schedules are set up automatically for you. In addition to scheduling, there are triggers tied to an event, such as when a foal is born, and you know there are a few things that you always do for a foal or mare. Once you record the event of the foal's birth, the system automatically schedules the care for the horses."

The veterinary and farrier section of the program is exceptional. When the veterinarian or farrier are done with their work, Paddock Pro automatically creates an invoice with the correct cost for the owner. Multiple farriers and veterinarians with their own schedules and costs can be added to the database and applied to certain groups of horses.

It is the accounting side of the program that is drawing rave reviews, however. Not only does the software keep track of how much the farm charges its clients for any services or medications, but the database also keeps track of the invoices and owners, including horses owned in partnerships or owners who are getting a certain discount in board or on a service. All of this information means that the billing is nearly done for the user. "Getting month-end statements out to clients is now streamlined, fast, and efficient," Hamson said. The invoices can even be customized to look unique to the farm.



Ron Mesaros



Another plus for the real-time aspect of the program is that the updates are instantaneous and available for all the staff to view. "With one button, you know exactly to the minute how much money is being spent and how much money is coming in," said Tom Hudson, Farm Manager at Magali Farms. "At the end of the month, forty to sixty man hours are saved on billing by switching to this program."

There are built-in security settings for the software, which farm managers may find useful as well. For example, the program can be set so that office staff can edit the accounting features, but not the horse features, and the farm staff can't tinker with the accounting, while some users can be read-only with no editing permissions. The user can give access to the farrier or veterinarian, and Paddock Pro can create a report for the industry professional of which horses in which stalls or paddocks need health care on a given date.

A subscription to Paddock Pro is based on monthly per-horse price, and there is no start-up cost, which is an exciting prospect to those wary of spending money to try yet another product. The flexible subscription plan is ideal for both small farms with only a few horses or large operations, such as Harris Farms in Coalinga.

Harris Farms Horse Division Manager David McGlothlin said, "We worked quite a bit with the developers to make sure it would do exactly what we want. We will start using the program live in June, and we think it will streamline our activities and the accounting and record-keeping. Alua Software contacted us early on and we voiced our concerns over the system, and they worked hard to incorporate everything we wanted."

Magali Farms' Office Manager Gayle Hudson gushed over the system as well. "The transition to Paddock Pro was very smooth, since it has built in tools to import all of your data. It has streamlined all of our daily processes. All of us are able to access the breeding, vet, farrier, boarding, arrivals, departures and owner records for any horse, instantly at any time. Paddock Pro is very user friendly and you don't have to adapt your company's record keeping to the program, rather with Paddock Pro you can adapt it to meet your company's needs! Paddock Pro has really changed everything for us." Magali Farms began using Paddock Pro a year ago.

In addition to Harris Farms and Magali Farms, three Kentucky farms also use Paddock Pro: Hopewell Farm and Glencrest in Lexington, and Stoneleigh Farm in Paris.

"It handles everything," Hamson assures potential clients. "It handles syndicated stallions and breeding rights. It handles stud fee billing and due dates, such as when a fee is due on August 1st versus a fee that is due when the foal stands and nurses. When our customers ask for a feature, we do our best to add it. You have access to the program anywhere, such as at the track or at the sales or on the road."

Gayle Hudson concurs, "Paddock Pro doesn't have to sync to anything, and it's accessible anywhere. The accounts receivable and billing part of the program is far superior. It allows you to manage your time and crews more effectively. I can take Saturdays off now."

Visit <http://aluasoft.com/> to learn more about Paddock Pro and view screen shots of the product, as well as to view a professional demo video. 📺

For the latest in California Breeding, Racing and Legislative News

log on to
www.ctba.com

**Internet advertising available,
for further information contact:
Loretta Veiga (626) 445-7800 ext. 227**