

# Production Management Software

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Leslie and Raymond Codd both started mushroom production on our home farm in Tullow in 1989 and as sales grew, the need to expand was evident. In 2008, we decided to close the two farms and invest in a mushroom facility with 18 growing rooms. Over the last seven years, we have continued to expand and we now have 38 growing rooms with a staff of 225.

The management of such a large number of staff has been a growing concern to us over the last year. While we did not have the need for a HR Department originally, the need became evident with the growing number of staff.

I have recently found myself taking over that position and have been examining closely what is happening at picker level and seeing how improvements can be made.

UNIFarm is a grower's management system that tracks and reports yield. We originally purchased this system some 6 years ago and recently felt that it needed upgrading. This upgrading was not just for more detailed reports that we felt were needed, but also to keep in line with the Organisation Working Time Act and current employment legislation.

The old fashion PDA's were starting to give problems and we looked at the advantages of tablets vs. PDA's.

## Traditional PDA's

- Devices costs roughly €1,000 each
- Supply of PDA's for a whole farm would be a huge investment
- When dropped and broken a typical repair cost €150
- Specialist programming was needed
- Service men had only a small screen to work
- Most work with a cradle hard wire connected to a computer
- Poor battery life



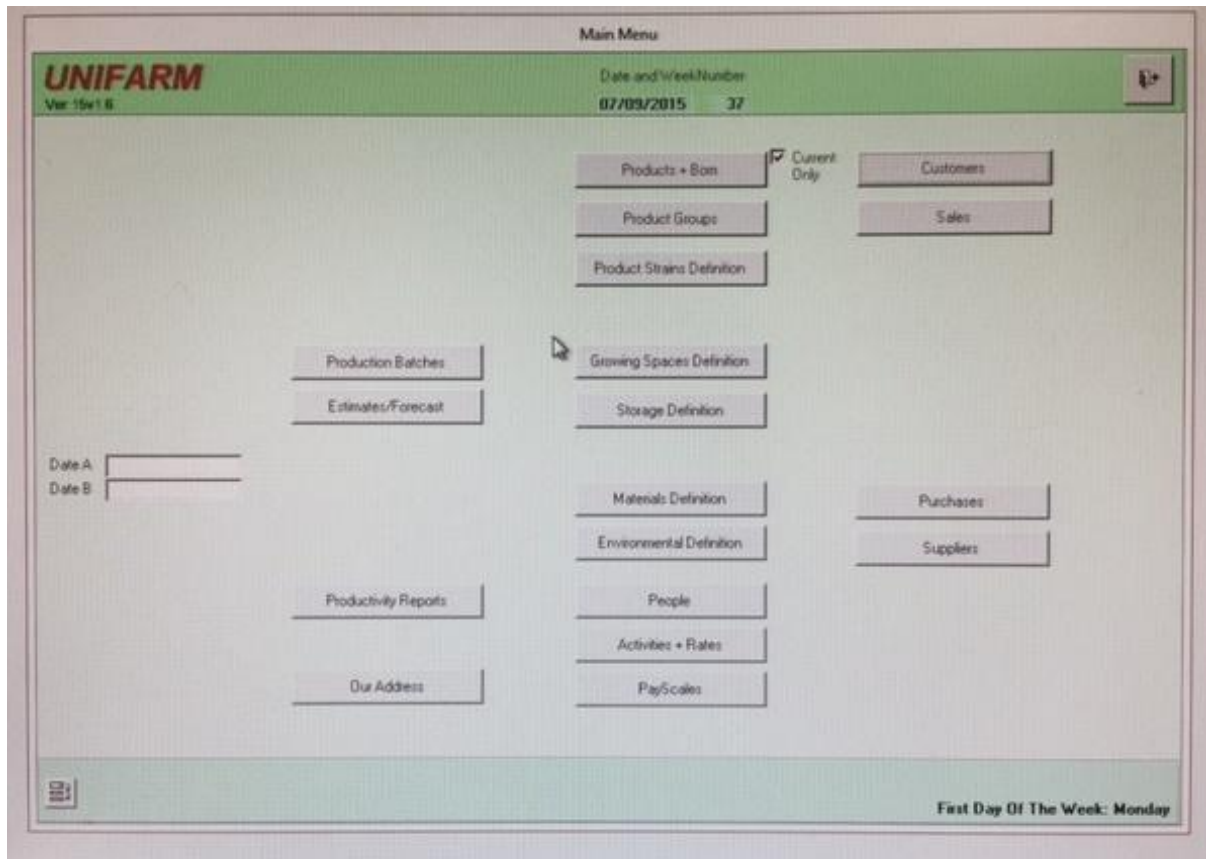
## Tablets

- Tablet Devices with MS Windows cost around €200
- 7", 8" and 10" sizes available
- Uses Wi-Fi to connect to the UNIFarm database system
- Can collect data out of wi-fi range and upload when wi-fi is available.
- A better user interface is present as the tablets have a larger screen
- Can be developed to suit the individual company's needs at a reasonable cost
- Bluetooth/USB barcode reader can be set up if required
- Can be left constantly charging if battery life reduces
- Larger 10" tablets can also run UNIFarm management & reporting off site



The system includes:

**Main computer system** – This is the main management system database.



From here, the following are maintained:

- Room Numbers – Room and Crop numbers and start and end of flush dates
- Materials Used – Usage of compost and casing by batch for traceability
- Harvesters – Staff are set up, knife number recorded, training rate dates are entered, nationality and email address
- Forecasts – Forecasts can be automatic once a crop is created. Estimates can be reviewed daily. Weights can be entered in kgs or lbs
- Chemicals – Any chemicals that are applied can be entered and the report will comply with legislation
- Activity type can be entered for staff e.g. Slicing, Cleaning etc

Some of the reports available are:

- Yield per room, per crop, per day. This can be as specific as your company requires. It can show percentage of buttons, cups, value pack etc picked per harvester
- Calculation of all harvesting and Holiday Pay
- Bank Holiday payments – 8% holiday pay is automatically calculated and transferred to payroll
- Total number of days staff have worked in any period

- Total number of days staff have had off in any period
- Hours of Work for each employee – this can also be useful for completing Social Welfare Forms
- Sunday Premium – No matter whether you pay extra money per hour or extra 33% on pricing of products on a Sunday this system can calculate and transfer to payroll
- Training Rates – UNIFarm is currently working on an automated system that will “Top Up” all staff to their current training rates and transfer to payroll. This is currently being done manually
- Emails – UNIFarm is also working on a system where the picking sheet for the harvester is emailed weekly

#### **Information on tablets –**

- Start time, finish time and breaks taken
- Product picked entered against harvester
- Staff list of those currently working in the room
- Total kgs/lbs picked each day from the flush



**IPad in Canteen** - This is where harvesters view and print their daily / weekly picking details.