

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



Prides Corner Farms
Industry-leading daily
logistics planning with
CACI's optimisation
software

CACI

DO AMAZING
THINGS WITH DATA



Highlights

- Automating rapid, responsive dispatches of fresh products
- Handles complex variables and seasonality
- Reps can focus on sales not routing
- Growing sales without adding admin overheads
- Estimated 10% mileage savings

About Prides Corner Farms

Prides Corner Farms is a wholesale grower in Connecticut, serving the North East corner of the USA from Maine through Ohio to Virginia. A family-owned nursery business in operation for over five decades, Prides Corner Farms grows over 3,000 varieties of plants and flowers on 600 acres of land. The business is proud of its industry-leading logistics, providing excellent service through easier, timelier deliveries that allow customers to sell quicker with less effort. Prides Corner Farms delivers to over 2,500 individual locations in a typical year, with 70 trucks making over 200 daily drops to garden centres, wholesale yards, landscapers and retailers in peak season – and sales continue to grow.

The challenge

A routing tool to handle destinations and loads that are different every day

Prides Corner Farms knew they needed software to optimise their truck delivery routes as their business grew. With a team of six working on route planning and sales reps spending many hours a day looking at delivery schedules, the team wanted to reduce workload and automate as much as possible.

“The planning job is complicated, and can be highly challenging,” says IT manager Christian Joseph. “We had been feeling for some time that we needed an automated system to improve our efficiency.” Prides Corner Farms uses a mix of its own and third party drivers and vehicles at its dispatch base in Connecticut.

Sales Manager Ray DeFeo explains: “We generally make smaller deliveries to many places and we need to meet the challenge of fresh stock that has to arrive on time. Dispatching orders the same week is our aim, and quick turnarounds – typically 48-72 hours - are an important point of difference for our customers. There's lots of change in order patterns day to day and season to season. For instance, in spring we have more large orders, so there are fewer stops per truck. But later in the year a truck may make five to six stops in a journey.”

The team needed a tool that could give them full route visibility, reduce mileage, optimise vehicle numbers and create efficient, cost-effective routes. Prides Corner Farms saw CACI's route optimisation solutions demonstrated at a trade show and saw its potential immediately.





The solution

Optimised deliveries and retrievals with a service focus

Rolling out CACI's software helped Prides Corner Farms take the next step in their programme to improve efficiency and service, building on a successful lean flow shipping operation that uses carts to load trucks. CACI provided the route optimisation software, consultancy, data customisation and implementation support.

Ray DeFeo says, "We did a two-month pilot – I think we were a challenging customer for the proof of concept because our model has so many variables. CACI helped us develop an excellent algorithm based on our business rules."

When reps take orders, they're placed in holding batches for each territory.

This tool groups the orders and allocates them to trucks, factoring in different sizes and type of truck to suit delivery access, at the destination. The algorithm also embraces daily time limits for drivers and variable speed limits on the route, to ensure prompt and accurate delivery times.

Logistics coordinator Brittany Landry runs the CACI's software twice daily. "We plan it to run two days before the target delivery date. Each territory rep has a quota to fulfil and they fill up the holding batches."

"We've recently implemented cart retrievals," adds IT manager Christian Joseph. "It's a big addition to the project. We had our Lean process, harvesting crops onto carts and putting them into our staging area. We have to get the carts back and we were doing it by hand, which was incredibly time-consuming. When realised that we could get the cart retrievals handled by CACI Logistics it freed up a lot of time."





The benefits

Cost savings and time savings that make room for growth

CACI Logistics has helped Prides Corner Farms save a huge amount of time on manual processing, by automating both delivery routes and scheduling and cart retrievals. Instead of six logistics planners, the firm now only needs one.

Sales rep Brad Sorenson says, “Before, I was spending as much as 40% of the day planning deliveries, rubbing out and correcting to get everything fitted together. Now, I meet our logistics planner Cheryl Records at 9am: she shows everyone the plan and we spend half an hour reviewing it to tweak it – that’s it.”

Despite being based in another country and time zone, support from the CACI team has been strong. According to Christian Joseph: “CACI being in London wasn’t an issue - the support has been rock solid. Our account manager was fantastic in answering our questions before go-live. We threw a lot of curve balls and she knocked them out of the park. They have a great virtual working set-up.”

Ray DeFeo is pleased with the impact of CACI’s route optimisation solutions on sales rep recruitment and training. “One of the biggest challenges a person would have, on top of potentially being new to the nursery business, they also had to understand the logistics pattern and how to route a truck. This is not a core sales skillset. Now, we can concentrate on recruiting and retaining people with great selling and customer service skills - logistics is separate,” he explained.

“Since 2012, our sales have doubled, but we haven’t had to increase the size of our sales teams. The Lean Flow approach and CACI’s software enable our reps to handle bigger territories because they can focus on sales. They’re happy because they have scope to make more commission with a bigger area to go at.”

Brad Sorenson adds, “Talking to drivers, they feel that their routes are now more efficient time-wise. They can start with the customer that can open earliest and keep moving without delays. The drivers really do like it.”

Prides Corner Farms estimates their mileage savings at ten per cent or more, which could mean annual savings of over \$100,000USD in transport costs.

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When you take into account the improved delivery efficiency, reduction in mileage travelled and the number of vehicles, the savings to Prides Corner Farms start to look really striking. We are growing 20-30% this year - we couldn't have handled this without CACI's route optimisation solution, nor the unprecedented times of Covid because the pressure would have caused people to leave and we wouldn't have got the orders out. Working with the team at CACI has been excellent - we see many years of growth with them.

Christian Joseph (IT Manager) and Ray DeFeo (Sales Manager)
Prides Corner Farms

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