Nursery Inventory Software (EPLPPS) Frequently Asked Questions

Updated December 1, 2009 --- 2011 Crop Year

This document supplements the more thorough "Help" section of the FCIC/DataScape Nursery Crop Insurance Inventory Software (inventory software). For more detailed information, select **Help** from the pull down menus or press the **F1** key.

Getting Started

Q. Where can I get the FCIC/DataScape Nursery Crop Insurance Inventory software?
A. There are two ways to get the software:
1) Request a CD from your crop insurance agent, or
2) Download the Inventory software from the USDA Risk Management Agency Web site at **http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/eplpps/**. Select the Nursery Crop Insurance Inventory Software for the proper crop year, and be sure to **Save** this file on your hard drive, making a note of where it is saved. If you need to perform a **Find** to locate the downloaded file later, it is named using the crop year, for example "2011-eplpps-ncip.zip".

Q. How do I install the software on my computer?
A. If you are installing from the CD, insert the disk and the installation program should start automatically. If you are installing from a downloaded file, unzip that file, open the folder, and double-click on the file named "Setup". Follow the onscreen directions to complete the installation.

Q. How do I create a company or "client"?
A. Open the inventory software by double-clicking the desktop icon or selecting the program in your start menu. Click on the **File** menu in the top menu bar, and then select **Plant Inventory**. To add a new client name, click on the **Add** button. After entering the name and address information, click on the **Save** button, and you will be given the option to create a plant inventory list.

Q. How do I create a plant inventory list?
A. Make sure that the correct client name is showing in the upper half of the "Client Selection for Plant Inventory" screen. In the lower half of the window, enter the state and county where nursery inventory is located. Enter an inventory description (required) and a reference if desired (optional), which will print on Inventory Valuation reports. Click on the **Save** button to save this information.

Q. How do I get to my plant inventory list?
A. After a client is created and the inventory location and the description are defined, you are ready to work with the details of the plant inventory list. With the proper client showing in the upper half of the window (use the **List** button to find the desired client name) and the proper inventory location and description in the lower half of the window, click on the **Select** button in the upper right corner.

Q. How do I add a plant to the list?
A. To add a plant to the plant inventory list, click on the **Select Plant for List** button. There are many ways to find a desired plant name, including botanical or common name, and several methods to filter, which are described in the Help section (click **Help** in the upper menu bar or press the **F1** key). After the desired plant name is located, click on the **Select** button which will select the plant and display a window of the insurable sizes available.

In the "Size Selection Screen," double click on every size to be included in your plant inventory list for this particular plant. For example, you are able to select 1 gal, 3 gal, and 5 gal sizes to be listed in your inventory. Multiple lines of the same size may be added if desired. After all desired sizes for the shown plant are selected, click on the **Continue** button to return to the "Plant Inventory" screen and enter your inventory quantities and catalog prices.

Q. How can I print out my plant inventory list?
A. After inventory information is entered, a Valuation Report can be printed to assist your crop insurance agent in writing your nursery crop insurance policy. To print the Valuation Report, you must have your "Plant Inventory" screen open. From the top menu bar, select **File**, **Print**, **Valuation Report**.

Using the Inventory Software

Q. How do I find a plant inventory list that I already created?
A. Once you create a plant inventory list, the data is maintained within the inventory software. To open a previously created list:

- In the top menu bar select **File, Plant Inventory**
- Click on the **List** button, select the correct client name, and press **Enter**.
- In the lower half of the Client Selection screen, confirm the proper inventory location and description are showing. If there are multiple lists for the same client name, you will be able to review the plant inventory list information by scrolling forward and back with the directional arrows in the inventory section of the screen.
- Click on the **Select** button to open the plant inventory list for the selected inventory.

Q. Can I modify my plant inventory list?
A. Yes, a plant inventory list can be opened and modified at any time. You may add or delete plants, add or delete sizes, and change quantities and prices. Any time changes are made to a plant inventory list, users will be prompted to save a backup of the new list when they exit.

After a plant inventory list is finalized and your crop insurance agent has written your policy, it is advisable to save a backup copy of the list as it has been insured and make no further changes to it. A copy of the saved inventory data file can be imported back into the software as a new description or under a new "Client" name which can then be changed and modified (see backup notes below).

Q. Can I change plant sizes on a plant inventory list?
A. Each plant inventory line cannot have the size changed. To modify sizes you must add new size lines and then either delete any unneeded inventory lines or set their quantities to 0.

Q. What if the size of my container is not listed in the sizes shown?
A. If your container size is not listed, click on **File**, **Volume Calculator**, then **Round** or **Square/Rectangular**, depending on your container shape. Insert the dimensions of your container. The size listed in the FCIC Container box is the size you will use when inputting your plant in the software.

Q. How do I determine a "Catalog Price" for a plant whose size is not listed in my catalog?
A. When a plant exists in inventory at a size not listed in your catalog or price list, the "Catalog Price" can be determined by using listed prices for other sizes ***of that same plant***. When in the plant inventory screen, click on the desired plant line and then on the **Missing Size Calculator** button, or right-click on the Catalog Price box for the desired plant line, and use the Missing Size Calculator tool to determine the correct price to use.

Q. How do I add an additional plant inventory list for another location?
A. The inventory software allows for a virtually unlimited number of plant inventory lists for each client name, as well as multiple clients. Select or create the desired client name, then **Add** as many plant inventory lists as you need.

Different plant inventory lists can be used for each location under the same client. Use the Description and Reference information to differentiate, such as "North Farm" or "Lake Road Farm".

Q. Can I combine two or more plant inventory lists?
A. Yes! Newly added in the 2011 crop year software, two or more plant inventory lists can be combined to create a new list. The lists to be combined must contain the same county, state, and endorsement information, and be from the same crop year version of the software. The original plant inventory lists to be combined must be exported and located inside the same folder on your computer. From within the inventory software, click on **File**, **Merge Plant Lists**, and then follow the onscreen instructions. This procedure creates a new plant inventory list data file while leaving the original data files untouched. Once the new list is created, ***you will need to import it*** into your inventory software. For more detailed instructions on this procedure, see the Help documentation.

Exporting Plant Inventory Lists

Q. Why would I want to export my plant inventory list?
A. Since the data you enter is contained *within* the inventory software, the program provides a method to “export” an inventory list. There are several reasons to export an inventory file:

- It is highly advisable to backup a plant inventory list and keep it in a safe off-site location for any possible need in the future.
- An inventory file from one crop year can be imported into the next crop year, thereby saving time.
- An inventory file can be imported into the FCIC/DataScape Appraisal software by a crop insurance adjuster, thereby reducing the time required to file a claim.

Q. How do I export my plant inventory list?
A. To export a plant inventory list, select the desired client and inventory. With the “Plant Inventory” screen open, pull down the **File** menu and select **Export**. Select the desired location and file name and proceed. See “Help” if additional information is needed.

Q. Where can I save my exported list?
A. When exporting a plant inventory list, the user can select the location to save the file through the Windows explorer window. The default location for exported and backup files is to a folder named EXPORTS within the DataScape Program folder, which is usually C:\DATASCAPE\DS2011 (DS + crop year of software). The location can be changed to be on a server, a local hard drive, a floppy disk drive, a CD drive, or even a USB drive. This exported file is very small, and can easily be emailed as an attachment.

Q. Can I use the plant inventory list I created in the Inventory software in other programs?
A. The plant inventory list can only be used by other FCIC/DataScape software programs.

Importing Plant Inventory Lists

Q. What files can be imported into the inventory software?
A. A plant inventory list can be imported only from:

- A file exported from the Inventory software for the current crop year.
- A file exported from the Inventory software for the previous crop year.
- A file exported from the Appraisal software (used by crop insurance adjusters) for the previous crop year.
- A new file that has been created using the "Merge Plant Lists" procedure which combines multiple plant inventory lists from this same crop year version of the Inventory software.

Q. How do I import a plant inventory list?
A. A plant inventory list can be imported only from a FCIC/DataScape software product as listed above. To import a list:

- Open the "Client Selection for Plant Inventory" screen (**File** menu, **Plant Inventory**).
- Depending if you want to import a plant inventory list for a new client name or just import a list into an existing client name, choose one of the following steps:
  - To add a new client name AND inventory, click on the **Import** button in the Client section at the top of the Client Selection for Plant Inventory screen, or
  - To add a plant inventory list to a client name that already exists, select the desired client using the **List** button, then click on the **Import** button in the inventory section of the screen (in the lower half of the screen).
- Locate the file you want to import and proceed. (See “What files can be imported?” above)
- Note: You can edit the client information or the description and reference information if needed.

Q. Why can’t I import my nursery inventory from Excel or another program into the inventory software?
A. The inventory software can only import data from other designated versions of the FCIC/DataScape software programs.

General Inventory Software Questions

Q. What should I do if my inventory software is not closed properly (such as a power outage, or a "force quit")**?**
A. Though you may always try to shut down the software program properly, situations do occur that result in an improper shutdown. If you suspect that this may have happened, or you see corrupted information showing on a screen or report, the best action is to re-index the program files. Immediately upon starting the FCIC/DataScape software program, pull down the **File** menu, and select **Re-Index**.

Q. Is the inventory software available for Macintosh?
A. The Inventory software is currently available for the following Microsoft Windows operating systems: Windows NT, 2000, XP, and Vista. Regarding Windows 7, as of Fall 2009, no problems or anomalies have been discovered during preliminary testing of the Inventory software on Microsoft Windows 7 beta versions.

Q. How do I know if the Pilot Nursery Grower’s Price Endorsement is available for my state?
A. The Pilot Nursery Grower’s Price Endorsement is currently available in 19 states. Those states are listed

in the **Help** (or press F1) menu under **Help**, **Index**, type in **Endorsements**.

Q. What are the PDF Books?
A. The Nursery PDF Books are similar to the inventory software in that they provide the same information and Nursery Crop Insurance explanations but in hard copy. The books provide an extra piece of information that cannot be found on the software: the plant factors. The plant factor is a multiplier to be used with the base price tables for each growing practice (container or field) for each plant. In the software, the prices for every plant are automatically calculated, so there is never a need to see the factors. If your company uses the software, the books may come in handy as a backup source of information.

Tips and Techniques

Q. How do I make a backup copy of a plant inventory list?
A. As with all programs and data, it is important to save your work and backup your data. Any time you make a change to any items on a plant inventory list and then click **Exit**, the program will prompt you to save the changes and make a backup copy of the data file. The backup data file will have a suggested file name starting with "bu_" (for backup), followed by information from the client name and inventory description, followed by the date and time. The default location for exported and backup files is to a folder named EXPORTS within the DataScape program folder, which is usually C:\DATASCAPE\DS2011 (DS + crop year of software). You may change the name and suggested file location if you like. By exporting and protecting the plant inventory list you will provide yourself with the means to restore your work into software for the same or the following crop year. In the unfortunate situation that you must file a claim, a saved plant inventory list can speed up the claim process. It is advisable to keep copies of your backup data files on removable media, such as a CD or external drive, and stored in a safe location.

Q. How do I test a backup?
A. If you have any doubts about a saved file or would like to confirm its integrity, you can "test" it by importing the file into a client named "TEST" or similar. **Keep the "master" list backed up**, and import a copy to test changes (for example, endorsements). If you are considering different types of insurance or endorsement options, consider saving a "master" copy of your plant inventory list. Importing from this master file and changing the client name or the inventory description will allow you to always start with the same list and then modify it for different scenarios.

Q. How do I name an exported file?
A. When exporting your file, it is best to give it a significant name. A file named "Inventory" may make sense today, but how about two years from now? "North Farm As Insured 5-21-2010" will indicate which location as well as the effective date. Naming your files wisely now will help when you are searching later. (Backup files are given a suggested name by default which includes information entered in the client name, inventory description, and the date and time of the backup).

Q. How can I import a plant inventory list that is from two or more crop years earlier?
A. Since the inventory software only imports from the same crop year or one year earlier, you can "hopscotch" the plant inventory list. Assume your inventory file is exported from crop year 2007 software. Open the inventory software for crop year 2008, import, then export and rename. Proceed through each year so that the data file is properly updated and converted from one year to the next.

Troubleshooting

Q. How do I fix an Autoexec error?
A. The error "AUTOEXEC.NT SYSTEM FILE IS NOT SUITABLE FOR RUNNING MS DOS AND WINDOWS APPLICATIONS" is related to your computer's Autoexec file. This file may have been

removed or altered by either a virus or other software. Following are some steps to resolve it. Please be very cautious in performing this repair, and always be sure your computer system is backed up before proceeding.

1. Run a virus scan to be sure your system is "clean."
2. For your knowledge, the official, full length description from Microsoft can be found at http://support.microsoft.com/, knowledgebase article #324767. The steps from that site which resolved this problem are #5, then #8 through 15, then #18.
3. Be extremely cautious working in the following folders and with the existing files. First, see if the required file exists:
    - Open My Computer
    - Open your local hard drive where the windows operating system resides, usually Local Disk (C:)
    - Open Windows folder, then System32 folder
    - Look for a file named Autoexec.nt (you may possibly only see Autoexec depending on your settings)
    - If the file **<u>does not exist</u>**, you should follow the steps from that Microsoft article to create a missing Autoexec file:
        - Open Notepad (in the Start menu, usually under Accessories)
        - On the **File** menu, click **New**
        - From this document, **Copy** the following text:

          @echo off
          REM AUTOEXEC.NT is used to initialize the MS-DOS environment unless a
          REM different startup file is specified in an application's PIF.
          REM Install CD ROM extensions
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\mscdexnt.exe
          REM Install network redirector (load before dosx.exe)
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\redir/
          REM Install DPMI support
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\dosx

        - In the Notepad document, Paste the text.
        - On **File** menu, click **Save As**
        - In the Save In box, be sure to select My Computer, then main hard drive (usually Local Disk (C:)), then Windows folder, then System32 folder
        - In the File Name box, type in AUTOEXEC.NT and then click **Save**
        - Restart your computer

    - If the file **<u>does exist</u>**, double-click on it to open the file in Notepad and:
        - Confirm that the following text exists in the document, or add it at the bottom of the existing text:

          REM AUTOEXEC.NT is used to initialize the MS-DOS environment unless a
          REM different startup file is specified in an application's PIF.
          REM Install CD ROM extensions
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\mscdexnt.exe
          REM Install network redirector (load before dosx.exe)
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\redir/
          REM Install DPMI support
          LH %SystemRoot%\system32\dosx

        - On **File** menu, click **Save.**

- Restart your computer.

Q. Why does some text overlap on the report?

A. If you notice a report with overlapping columns or text, or other similar problems, it most likely indicates a need to "Calibrate" the printer. In the process of printing, there is a "Calibrate" button on the print dialog box. This process only needs to be performed once after the inventory software is newly installed. (If you change printers you may also need to "Calibrate" for that printer). Printing multiple reports only requires calibration before the first.

For more information, contact Claire White or phone 816-926-5131.

This document is available online at http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/eplpps/faq.shtml