# Tomecek Agronomy Services Inc.

8613 Eberts Line, Chatham, ON   N7M 5J2

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## Year End Report

## GRADEHUB- 2023

c/o OPVG
435 CONSORTIUM CT.
LONDON, ON

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# GRADEHUB

The GradeHub system was used by the Ontario Processing Tomato Industry in 2023 for the 2nd year in a row. The platform allows Graders to easily record grading details, calculate tare values and automatically produce grading certificates which are then printed and emailed to all parties, while all data remains stored and accessible internally. From there, Processors use another version of the app to incorporate each load's weight and load value, before producing a Final Grading Certificate that is automatically emailed to growers. The app can track transfers *between* the different Processors and gives Processors the ability to generate payout statements for their growers.

The App was once again well received by Growers. They found the app easy to use and enjoyed having access to all their certificates on their mobile device while out in the field. The App gave them the ability to quickly determine what percentage of their contract they were at, and they could also see what percentage the other growers (at *their* processor) were at too. We have been told that this feature is also helpful for the Processors,as it cuts down on the number of phone calls and emails they receive from growers asking for this information.

Our team was responsible for obtaining and verifying all initial grower and contract data from the 5 Processors and AgGrade, then pre-populating/programming the App to track and calculate the following:

-Grower Names, Contracted Acreages & Tonnages, Field Names

-Details of each Processor's contracts (i.e., Price, Colour and Tare Factors)

-Staff Names and Email Addresses who will be using GradeHub

All the data input/calculated within the App is then syphoned off into back-end spreadsheets for each party (i.e., Each Processor, AgGrade, OPVG), in their *own* live Google Sheet document that updates in real-time as each new certificate is created and/or weight is added, and only with the data that **they** have permission to access. To help the Processors, AgGrade and the OPVG work with this large amount of data over

the season, we used a program called, Looker Studios and created customized reports for each of them. Although these reports function quite well *within* the program itself, making daily viewing easy, these reports (if more than 1 page in length), do not print out nicely directly from the program. Instead, users would have to export the raw data from Looker Studios into Excel, where unfortunately it loses the parameters by which the program had originally sorted the data, so it does require some additional steps by end users who are not just "viewing the data" but wanting to save it or print.

This year, GradeHub calculated the tare values and produced grading certificates for over 10,300 loads at 4 of the 5 major processors. Overall, the app functioned well, there were no major technical issues or service outages and it once again proved to be a trustworthy and reliable tool for generating and storing this important industry data. Over the entire season, someone from our team was always "on-call" to answer calls/emails that came in, and helped all parties (AgGrade, Processors, Growers, OPVG) regarding accessing the app, navigating the system, and responding immediately to any issues that arose.

We implemented a new change in the 2023 season that allowed graders to correct errors on existing certificates, without having to "cancel" them and start again. For every change they made, the app would then update the "revision number" on the certificate. This saved time at the grading station and reduced the unintentional creation of so many duplicate certificates, which had been an issue in 2022. We also added a new feature to the app that helped graders identify why a certificate was coming up as "rejectable" (i.e., what specific parameter was outside its acceptable range) *before* they saved and printed it, which helped graders identify and correct unintentional data entry errors, saving time and mitigating errors at the grading station.

We received a few requests from growers last year about having more than 1 person on their operation be able to access the App and also about increasing the number of people who can receive their emailed certificates. With the OPVG's permission, each operation now have access for up to 2 unique user IDs and can get certificates sent to up to 4 email addresses We were also able to implement a grower's suggestion about adding a "comment" box and a "truck driver" box to the growers' app, so they could add notes onto each certificate/load that only they would see in their app, and also have available at the end of the season in their individual back-end spreadsheet.

In terms of any issues experienced this year and/or future considerations with respect to changes/modifications needed for the app next year, it was minimal. At the very end of the season when transfers first began from one processor to another, there was an issue with the app that would not let the graders sync their changes and print certificates. Our team worked with AgGrade and was able to get everything fixed and back up and running quickly. The main issue that AgGrade experienced throughout the season was not having a strong, reliable internet connection in the grading sheds, making it difficult for them to sync and print at times/ They are working with the respective processors to find better alternatives for next season.

The growers have mentioned that they would like the app to give them the ability to see what time their trucks leave the processor's facility. This is a bit tricky, as the processes are different at each of the different processors. Theoretically this could be achieved by having the scale house clerk enter the weights for each load directly into the App, as the truck leaves the scales, and then having us add a viewable "timestamp" onto this particular field of the app, which would give growers a pretty good idea of when their truck departed. However, the issue at this point is that not all Processors are set up to do this. Many are still printing the grading certificates and then having the scale house print the weights directly onto these certificates. The next morning, an office admin person would pick up the certificates and then enter the corresponding weights into GradeHub, so for these growers, a "time stamp" on when the weight is entered would not be useful.

This year, HCC decided not to use the GradeHub App. They had AgGrade use their internal software exclusively to generate all certificates instead of entering it into BOTH systems like was done in 2022 (i.e., HCC's and GradeHub). They were having their own App developed that would communicate the grading data from their internal software to growers. We did some preliminary work to figure out how we could import HCC's raw data into GradeHub on some regular interval throughout the season, to re-incorporate it with the rest of the industry's real-time data, so the OPVG could still have access to one industry-wide master data set with their corresponding reports. Despite reaching out on a few occasions, we never received any data from HCC. We are open to continuing to collaborate with them in the future to try and amalgamate this data.

Although this was an exceedingly difficult season for us *personally*, we are proud of the service we were still able to offer and felt that the app performed well for all parties. We have been forced to make some significant staffing changes in our business, which may affect some of our existing processes in terms of how we continue to offer this service. In the past, we were able to make changes/modifications to our apps very quickly, sometimes even mid-season. Although we still hope to provide you with the same technical capabilities and good customer service, unfortunately we will not be as nimble when it comes to implementing changes/modifications to our apps. We will require more time to be able to develop and implement changes.

**Going forward, we will need to receive all requested changes/modifications for the App by December 31st of 2023. Depending on how in-depth these changes/modifications are, we would then prepare a quote (or revise our existing quote) for the added changes, and give OPTAC until February 15th to approve it, so we would have enough time to develop and implement the changes before the season begins.**

Thank you for your business.