



AGROSERVICIOS PAMPEANOS (ASP) PIONEERING CROP MONITORING SERVICES FOR PRECISION AG IN LATIN AMERICA



Argentina-based agro-retailer expands offering
with Planet satellite imagery



CHALLENGE

Provide ASP crop consultants with the most thorough and objective recommendations for growers

SOLUTION

The Echelon precision ag platform, powered by frequent Planet imagery, delivers timely field management insights to consultants and customers

RESULTS

- 50 percent of ASP's customer base registered for imagery services in just two years
- More directed use of inputs increases crop production by an average of 25 percent
- High spatial resolution allows accurate monitoring of high-value crops
- Near-daily imagery updates help farmers make more timely decisions
- Broad-area imaging enables ASP to consult customers across four countries

The fertile lowlands of the Pampas region in South America are ideal for agriculture, and Agroservicios Pampeanos (ASP), an Agrium company, has been supplying fertilizers, crop protection products, and seeds to growers there since 1995. In the past two years, ASP has become the first company in South America to offer frequent information to its retail customers about the status of their crops based on satellite imagery insights. The imagery helps ASP consultants assess fields and make recommendations to growers about ways to maximize their production and optimize their costs.

ASP chose Planet imagery to make its monitoring services flourish. "We required imagery that was high-frequency, high-resolution, and most important, available quickly so it would be very up to date," says Carlos Faricelli, ASP Business Manager for Argentina. "Planet excels in all of these areas. With reliable, rapidly updated imagery, we have been building out our suite of services and have seen great returns in customer engagement and retention."



GROWING RETAIL WITH SATELLITE IMAGERY, 60 STORES AT A TIME

Headquartered near Buenos Aires, ASP operates 60 retail agro-centers in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. "In addition to offering agro-chemicals and the equipment to apply them, each of our agro-centers also houses three to four highly skilled agronomic engineers who provide consulting services to our customers," says Faricelli. "Growers in the region face the same challenges as farmers elsewhere in the world—how to increase their crop yields and profitability."


Achieving these goals requires access to the right information at the right time, across large areas. "Our consultants need the ability to give customers a clear understanding of what is happening in each field at each stage of crop growth," says Faricelli. "By detecting issues such as crop disease or poor soil conditions early, we can help growers produce more per hectare."

ASP realized that satellite imagery could contribute high value to its consulting capabilities. "We saw that Planet Monitoring would enable our agronomists to make recommendations

based on the most thorough and objective information available," says Faricelli. "When you can show customers the imagery to back up what you're saying, it's very powerful."



Growers and ASP consultants assess crop data in-field.



“In just two years, we already have half of our customers signed up. Over 5,000 customers across the region are now engaging with our imaging services.”

CARLOS FARICELLI, Business Manager for Argentina, ASP



GAINING 5,000 IMAGERY SERVICE USERS IN JUST TWO YEARS

The adoption of satellite imaging-based services has been rapid and sizable. “In just two years, we already have half of our customers signed up,” says Faricelli. “Over 5,000 customers across the region are now engaging with our imaging services. Planet imagery has added a whole new dimension to our consulting across a range of activities including monitoring plant vitality, detecting early signs of crop stress, and mapping damage.”

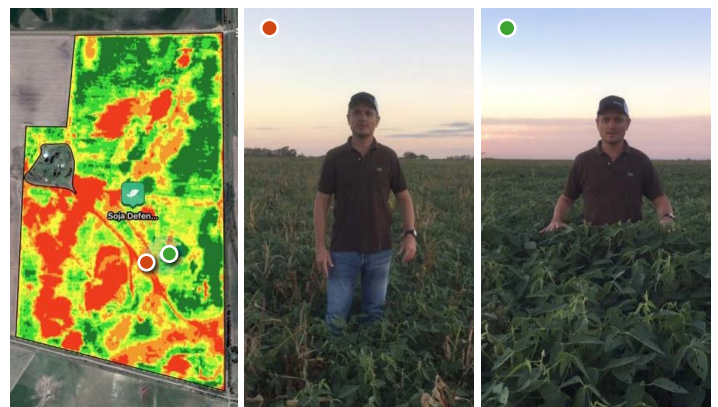
One reason for the success of the new offering is that the ASP staff is well trained to work with the imagery and explain the insights it provides. “The Planet platform easily integrates into Echelon, the platform from our sister company CPS that we use to produce maps and prescriptions,” says Faricelli. “Our consultants can quickly pull up the information they need. Our customers can easily see and understand the results, and we find them wanting to engage further with the data.”



DELIGHTING RETAIL CUSTOMERS WITH IN-FIELD INSIGHTS

Agronomists can access imagery of a customer’s field anytime, anywhere. “Our consultants can download the imagery to a tablet and take it with them,” says Faricelli. “It’s great to see the customer reaction when one of our team members goes on site and shows the images and maps to a grower while walking through the field. That’s often the first time the grower has accessed a powerful new technology like this in such an easy and relevant way.”

Planet satellites cover the entire globe every day and continually feed data to the cloud, where ASP can access it. “Anytime we make a site visit, we bring imagery from just the past few days,” says Faricelli. “Having timely imagery means we can recommend treatment before diseases or pests get out of control. It also means an image with heavy cloud cover is not a problem, because a fresh image will be online within days.”



Echelon maps accurately detail variance in crop vitality. Above we see two locations of soy production (left) with low vegetation (center) and high vegetation (right).



DRIVING CUSTOMER SUCCESS, FROM PEANUTS TO POLO PONIES

While growers are using the Planet imagery from ASP to monitor a variety of crops, the new service is proving especially important for peanut growers. “About 90 percent of the peanut production in Argentina comes from the Cordoba province, and it is a very high-profile, high-value export crop,” says Faricelli. “Previously, the preharvest estimation of yield for peanut crops was difficult and time-consuming. With the satellite imagery service, it is not only faster, but more accurate.”

ASP customers have also found some unconventional ways to leverage the imagery service. “We can even use it to inform grazing patterns for polo ponies,” says Faricelli. “Knowing when to shift animals to a new pasture, while other areas recover from grazing, is essential to raising this type of livestock and maintaining balanced field health.”



INCREASING PRODUCTION BY 25 PERCENT, WITH THE BEST TO COME

In addition, imagery assists in-field delineation of management zones, so growers can make management decisions based on the field conditions. By applying the appropriate inputs to just the right zones, growers can reduce the overall amount and cost of fertilizer while boosting performance. Growers using the imagery-assisted ASP nitrogen high-yield program have been able to increase production by an average of 25 percent with variable rate application techniques.

For ASP, the best is still to come. “Planet imagery increases our consultants’ knowledge about how best to apply our agriculture products, and that helps our customers improve their results,” says Faricelli. “We want all of our customers to love this technology. Planet imagery helps growers focus on the things that really make a difference, and often increases their engagement with crop management because it’s presented in an easy and interesting way.”



Detailed vegetation indices provide insight into crop deficiencies that help advisors prescribe treatment options and empower growers to take action.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Planet Monitoring for Agriculture, visit planet.com/ag

For more about ASP, see www.asp-la.com (in Spanish)



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