



# Dobler & Sons

## Intelligent workflow from farm to processing



Dobler & Sons has incorporated a fleet management system to comply with the recent ELD mandate and to improve overall efficiency in managing its fleet and team of drivers.

**Executive Summary:** Dobler & Sons produces and transports conventional and organic baby spinach and spring mix from the field, to processing and the final customer. Dobler & Sons is leveraging Trimble fleet management solutions to make intelligent business decisions for the company's multi-vehicle fleet while ensuring their drivers comply with the ELD mandate.

### Solutions

#### Trimble Fleet Management:

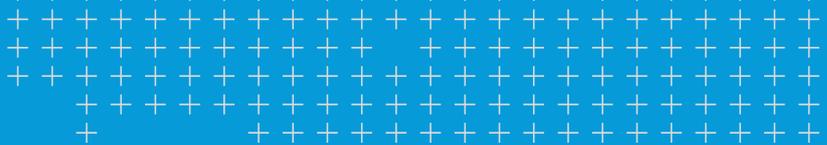
Trimble Fleet Management provides businesses that manage fleets with real-time visibility of vehicle location, status and diagnostics. On-demand information, activity reports and exception alerts enable intelligent business decisions to be made quickly in order to run the most efficient fleet possible.

Find out more at [www.trimble.com/FSM](http://www.trimble.com/FSM)

#### Trimble FieldMaster Logs:

Allows field service fleets to easily and accurately comply with Hours of Service regulations and document pre-and-post-trip vehicle inspection reports (DVIR) using electronic logging.

Find out more at [resources.trimble-fsm.com/eld](http://resources.trimble-fsm.com/eld)

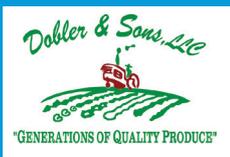


# overview

Dobler & Sons was founded in 1957 and has transitioned from producing head lettuce and broccoli to primarily growing baby spinach and mixed greens. Dobler & Sons operates part of the year in Watsonville, California and moves operations to Holtville, California for a prolonged growing season. Dobler & Sons is equipped with 11 vehicles and a driving team of 14.



Location:  
California, USA



## CHALLENGE

In 2015, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) mandated the use of electronic logging devices (ELD) and automatic driver vehicle inspection reports (DVIR) to improve roadway safety. The FMCSA gave a two-year grace period for fleets that are required to implement ELD technology to find and install a certified ELD solution by December 18, 2017. While many agriculture operations are exempt from the ELD mandate, Dobler & Sons drivers travel across state lines and often exceed the distance limits required to receive ELD exemptions. In addition, their drivers were spending approximately 40 minutes per day on reporting using paper logs, and when vehicle repairs were identified from driver inspections, the requests were often not documented properly resulting in repairs not being completed in a timely manner. The company was also having difficulty providing customers with accurate delivery estimates, since dispatchers did not have visibility into real-time driver routes and status. Dobler & Sons wanted to find a solution that would not only make them compliant but also provide tools that would improve overall fleet management.



## SOLUTION

Dobler & Sons approached its Trimble Field Service Management (FSM) dealer in Northern California, Peterson Trucks, for help with its business challenges. Working with Peterson, Dobler implemented the Trimble Fleet Management and FieldMaster Logs solutions, which have provided the following benefits to its business in addition to ELD compliance:

- **More insight** – Dispatchers can track the real-time location of trucks during each phase of the produce pickup and delivery cycle.
- **Streamlined communication** – Dispatchers can now communicate quickly with produce delivery sites. Customers are now ready to receive perishable products based on real-time delivery information.
- **Dispatch to driver communication** – The Fleet Management messaging app lets dispatchers quickly communicate route changes due to traffic, or to add another stop to a driver's route.
- **Vehicle maintenance** – Vehicle diagnostics offer real-time analytics and reporting on fuel, carbon, odometer and fault codes.
- **Continuous cost savings with tracking** – Better reporting and tracking translates to shorter truck idle times, accurate routing and fuel savings, and meeting delivery time targets.



## IMPLEMENTATION

Dobler & Sons has been in the business of producing conventional and organic produce for over 50 years. The California company grows and transports baby spinach and mixed greens 365 days a year between different grow sites to take advantage of an extended growing season. Dobler's fleet of drivers bring produce from the field to processing.

In 2015, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published the final electronic logging device rule, or ELD mandate. Recognizing that their drivers had to adhere to the mandate by December 18, 2017, Dobler & Sons worked with Trimble FSM dealer, Peterson Trucks, to discuss a certified ELD solution with additional tools to improve overall operations. Nicholas Will, transportation technology manager with Peterson Trucks, met with Dobler & Sons' human resources department head, David Castaneda to understand the company's workflow and help direct Dobler to the best possible fleet management solution based on it's needs.

"Even though most agriculture operations are exempt from the upcoming ELD mandate, Dobler travels across state lines and exceeds the distance minimum to receive ELD exemptions," said Will. **"Like many companies, Dobler operates under unique circumstances, and I wanted to have a clear understanding of their operation so that we could deliver a solution that addressed their greatest needs and concerns."**

"I'm a safety and compliance guy, and using paper logs creates more room for error," said Castaneda. **"We needed a system that was essentially error proof and allowed me to see that every driver is operating safely under FMCSA regulations."**

Dobler & Sons worked closely with Will to select and implement the Trimble FSM Fleet Management and ELD solutions. It equipped it's fleet with eleven ELD ruggedized devices that would make them ELD compliant and provide additional tools and valuable data to ensure that it's fleets are running as efficiently as possible.

## TRAINING

Dobler wanted to make the transition as easy as possible for it's drivers, as they were already having some anxiety over making the change from manual to electronic reporting. Together, Dobler & Sons and Peterson Trucks developed an onboarding program that had the fleet of drivers up and running in a matter of days.

"I knew the drivers had some hesitations and I completely understood their concerns," said Will. "The majority of Dobler drivers are Spanish speakers, and I quickly realized that most of our training tools required translation. I worked with a Peterson Trucks team member to translate our training tools from English to Spanish, which helped tremendously. The Dobler team also took driver training very seriously by slowly onboarding drivers and addressing individual concerns as they arose."

"We wanted our drivers to be as comfortable with the implementation as possible," said Martin Gutierrez, dispatch and IT personnel for Dobler & Sons. "We would introduce one aspect of the Trimble Fleet Management solution to the drivers and have them focus on that one tool solely until we felt like it was time to introduce another tool. We knew that for the new system to be successful, we needed complete buy-in from our drivers. Our team works hard to have an open dialogue with our drivers to make sure they are comfortable talking to us about questions or concerns."

Within a week, the Dobler & Sons fleet of drivers were fully utilizing the new Trimble fleet management solution. Peterson Trucks and the Dobler & Sons management team worked



together to ensure drivers were comfortable and not overwhelmed with information. They made the drivers feel comfortable with hands-on learning and being fully engaged with questions and concerns. Approximately one month after the solution was installed, the Dobler & Sons management team reported considerable improvement in driver morale, and reduction of time spent on manual logging and overall delivery times.

## OPERATIONAL BENEFITS

### Reporting and Compliance

A handful of Dobler & Sons' drivers are ELD exempt because they spend the majority of their time on other activities other than driving. Castaneda mentioned that drivers could go from being exempt to fully functional at any point in time once they jump behind the wheel. The software captures everything when employees clock in and out as it pertains to their status. If the driver is pulled over, the report will show that the driver has been exempt up until the point they are driving, making the driver's history entirely transparent during traffic stops and inspections.

"The value of the Trimble solutions is that they truly honor the data, which makes my job easier," said Castaneda. "We are required to report vehicle maintenance and inspection information to regulatory agencies, and our maintenance manager has been so excited that the repair requests are addressed promptly, which also reduces the chances of a DOT ticket or point reduction."



## EFFICIENCY AND COST SAVINGS

"We have already seen a 50% reduction in time spent on manually logging paper since we have transitioned our operations to the Trimble electronic log system," said Gutierrez. "Our whole day is laid out electronically, so the drivers know where to be at what time, and if there are changes, those updates are made automatically as well. Before, we were calling drivers to find out their ETA for the customer; now, we just look at the real-time map to see where they are and when the precious cargo is set to arrive at the customer."

Each load is now assigned a five-digit number to track the produce throughout the entire process, sending customers an email with the accurate delivery time to receive the shipment. Gutierrez said the Trimble fleet management system has decreased detainment for the drivers, which means less waiting for the customer to receive their produce. Because of this, drivers also spend less time idling and more time on the road making more deliveries.

"With the voice to text technology and the incredible geofencing abilities, our fleet can be rerouted quickly when modifications need to be made," said Gutierrez. "Additionally, our drivers would each spend on average around 40 minutes a day on reporting; now it's all done electronically. When you do the math, that's a significant amount of time saved over the course of a day, week, month and years. Time is money for both our drivers and our company."



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