

Real-time Freight Visibility Drives Customer Satisfaction



A leading producer of Idaho® potatoes shipping product to grocery and food processing customers nationwide, Sun-Glo of Idaho deployed the Descartes MacroPoint™ real-time freight visibility platform to improve the customer experience, strengthen carrier relationships, and decrease operating costs. With real-time visibility into its shipments, Sun-Glo increased operational efficiency, improved on-time delivery performance, and reduced late penalties and detention fees.

“Descartes MacroPoint has given us the ability to view, analyze, predict, and communicate the status of any shipment in real-time. By proactively determining which shipments are at risk for late delivery, we can take the appropriate actions to help our customers streamline their dock receiving and improve the planning of downstream deliveries, while minimizing penalties on our end.”

Shannon Bush

Manager, Transportation, Sun-Glo

Company Profile

Sun-Glo of Idaho
Agricultural Producer

Descartes Solution

Load Tracking and Freight Visibility

About the Client

Established in 1974 by five Southeast Idaho potato growers, Sun-Glo of Idaho, Inc. is a fourth-generation, family-owned grower, packer, and shipper of premium-quality fresh Idaho® Russet Burbank potatoes, with state-of-the-art facilities and sales operations in Sugar City, Idaho.

Quick Overview

Challenge

Late Deliveries Threaten
Customer Relationships

Solution

Freight Visibility Sharpens
Delivery Performance

Results

- Fewer Penalties
- Elevated Customer Service
- Increased Distribution Efficiency
- Better Carrier Collaboration

Challenge: Late Deliveries Threaten Customer Relationships

As one of the largest Idaho potato shippers, Sun-Glo's modern facility has the capacity to process and ship more than 250 million pounds of potatoes each season to customers throughout the continental United States. The company's manual load tracking process offered limited visibility into shipment status, compromising customer and carrier relationships, and risking sizeable penalties and detention fees. To elevate customer service through more efficient distribution, Sun-Glo wanted a real-time freight visibility solution that would enhance delivery performance, improve its ability to manage shipping disruptions, and reduce costly penalties.

Solution: Freight Visibility Sharpens Delivery Performance

Aiming to improve customer and carrier relationships, Sun-Glo implemented the automated Descartes MacroPoint real-time freight visibility platform. The solution leverages a combination of carrier connectivity through carrier dispatch/TMS solutions, electronic logging device (ELD) connections, and the Descartes MacroPoint mobile app to provide real-time load location and status. By spending less time tracking shipments, the Sun-Glo team increased operational efficiency and improved customer service through better on-time delivery performance, timely updates, and a reliable system of record.

"We used to average 6 check calls per load, which was time-consuming and ultimately ineffective; we'd often only be notified of a late delivery when our customer called. Now we can view the location and updated ETA of every shipment, simultaneously, in real-time, and provide automated departure, pre-arrival, and arrival notifications to our customers," said Shannon Bush, Manager, Transportation, at Sun-Glo.

"Costly penalties and fees were taking a bite out of our bottom line. Grocery customers were levying late fees as much as \$500 per late load, and processing plants would often charge \$100 for each hour that a truck was late," noted Bush. Descartes MacroPoint helped Sun-Glo put the brakes on customer penalties and carrier detention fees by proactively identifying shipments at risk for late delivery and taking the appropriate actions to manage the disruption.

In addition, the platform's geofencing capabilities and detailed tracking history simplified the process of verifying the legitimacy of detention claims. Bush added, "We can manage our carriers more effectively now. Sometimes carriers would submit a detention, but we couldn't easily tell if it was legitimate, or if they were simply late and missed their appointment. With Descartes MacroPoint, we can see the carrier's actual time of arrival."

Results:



Fewer Penalties

With predictive ETAs, Sun-Glo can identify at-risk shipments and work collaboratively with its customers to reduce late deliveries. The Descartes solution helped the company minimize detention fees and realize a sharp reduction in late penalties.



Elevated Customer Service

Predictive ETAs, proactive alerts, and load tracking data consolidated in a single interface enable customers to make the necessary adjustments to dock schedules and labor distribution in the event of delayed deliveries—saving time, resources, and money.



Increased Distribution Efficiency

Sun-Glo streamlined track-and-trace processes, simplified its workflow, and increased communication speed and agility across its carrier network by replacing inefficient manual check calls with real-time freight tracking and automated alerts.



Better Carrier Collaboration

With geofencing alerts providing real-time visibility into carrier departures and arrivals, Sun-Glo improved detention management significantly. An automated audit trail minimized disputes with carriers, leading to improved collaboration.