About Barn Report

Barn Report is a data processing and delivery service for Dicam networks.
For a low monthly fee, we configure the networked system to log data such as temperatures, settings, feed and water use, and download and process this data for subscribers.
Using Internet features for easy access to the data, this system means that review is as easy as point and click and provides daily updates.

How does it work?

A production site has a network of between 1 and 30 Dicam units. These processor based units may be installed for a range of functions including control, alarm or monitor only.

A logger connected to the network is configured to access and store data from the Dicam units, and it is connected to a modem and telephone line.
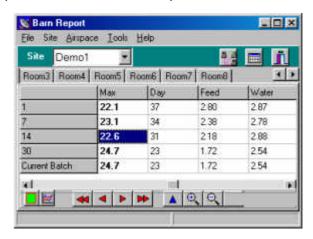Our server dials the logger's modem and downloads the stored data at regular intervals. Depending on the service level required, this is every day or every few days.
The server processes the data according to the type of system and user requirements. For example, it might assemble all the data for a particular room to show temperatures, equipment operation summaries feed use and so on.

The processed data is then stored on an Internet connected server.
We provide a viewing program (Barn Report) for presentation and review on the user's own PC. This can show data in a variety of formats (numerical summaries and graphical charts) and also has data export facilities.

Report Page
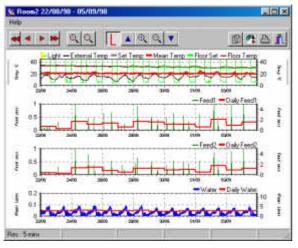
(shown in miniature)

Chart Page

(shown in miniature)

For more information about Barn Report, take a look at the other information sheets on this page, and try downloading the program and running it with the demonstration data.

FAQs

What sort of PC do I need?
To view data using Barn Report you need a PC running Windows 95 (or higher) with a modem and a Dial Up Connection (standard Internet account).

Can anyone else access my data?
Yes, if you want them to. No, if you don't.
Processed data is stored on an Internet connected server, but encoded so it can't be downloaded or viewed except with Barn Report. So others can't access your data, unless you want them to have access.
But conversely, if you do want others to see the data, they can. Because the data is held on a server, as many as you like can see it. This is one of the most best features. Because many can view the data, it means workers, owners, advisers and the like can all view it, review it, discuss it from a common base, all up to date. You can even employ a "watching service" to do routine checking for you.

Is it difficult to set up and run?
No. That's part of the point of using Barn Report.
With other data logging systems, you have to set them up and run them yourself, which is complicated and time consuming. With Barn Report, we set it up and run it, all you need to do is use it.

Do I have to be on the Internet to view the data?
No. You connect only to download the latest processed data, which takes just a few seconds. Thereafter, you can view the data off line, saving call costs.

Do I have to download data every day?
No. We recommend a regular download, because Barn Report is an efficient way of checking what's been happening; a daily tour of the site using Barn Report is worthwhile. But it's not essential.
If you don't download, the data stays on the server for one to three months, constantly refreshed. When you connect, Barn Report automatically checks which files you need and downloads accordingly. If you download less often, such as once week, the download takes a few seconds longer, but the difference is marginal.
After a time, older files are removed, but we keep them for several years. If you haven't downloaded, or have accidentally deleted the files, we can send them by email.

Can I review old data?
Yes. When you download data, copies are kept on your PC, so you can go as far back as your data goes. This is useful because it means you can do comparisons over long periods of time, comparing one year with another, for example.

Will my hard disk fill up?
No. We use a very efficient method of compression and de-duplication. For example, a typical pig breeding site would generate around 5 to 10 million data readings a year. With other data logging systems this would take up 20 to 100 Mb of disk space. (Even more with some systems.) Barn Report uses only about 3 Mb for the same data.

Does it slow down as it gets more data?
No. You may have experienced this kind of problem with database type products. For example, a herd management system may be quick when you start with just a few animals, but slows to a crawl after a while. Barn Report uses an advanced system of "packetised data". Besides making downloads quick and efficient, it means the presentation system doesn't slow down as you accumulate data.
The only time you might notice a slightly slower response is if you want to extract data from a longer period such as a year or more, but even this takes only a few seconds.

Is there a simpler and cheaper way of getting at the data?
Yes, and it's Barn Report!
Barn Report is a service based system because it **is** the **cheaper** and **simpler** as well as **better** way, because our customers asked for it.
It's possible to do it yourself - downloading, processing, all of that, without Barn Report. But it's a lot more of a time consuming chore than it looks.
It's like doing the accounts - we all want to see the results, but who wants to enter al the purchase invoices? It soon stops being fun. So it doesn't get done, or it gets done badly, or both. Which is just what our customers found. Yes, there a lot of information available from the systems, but unless you tap into it, it goes down the pan.
So unless you happen to be the kind of person who has unlimited timed (and you work for free), it does work out cheaper, it does work out simpler, it does work out a lot better.

How long would I be locked in?
There's no lock in. There's no minimum period. Fees are payable monthly in advance, but that's all.
With other systems you have to buy the software up front. If you decide not to use it, you won't get your money back. If the manufacturer upgrades the software later, you'll have to pay an upgrade fee.
With Barn Report, there's just one low monthly fee. This includes use of the program, our calls to your system, Barn Report technical support and program upgrades. And only for as long as you use it. The only costs not included are the cost a telephone line for the modem (usually, it just shares an existing line), and your own Internet account and calls by you to your ISP. (There are now many free or very cheap Internet accounts now available.)
If you don't like it, or you don't think it's worth our fee, then you just cancel your account, simple as that.

If I stop subscribing, do I lose the data?
No. If you want to stop, we stop downloading and we close down the server access, but you still have the data you got previously. You can still use the program on your PC to look at it.

Will Barn Report work with my older Dicam system?
Yes. Dicam is designed as a compatible system. That means the software is compatible right back to the earliest units, even if you have different types of ventilation or alarm system controlled by Dicam. (With most competitive systems, cross compatibility is very limited - for example, all the controllers must be the same model.)
Dicam is also forward compatible - depending on the age of your system we may suggest software upgrades to take advantage of latest advances.

What if I have other makes of controller or alarms?
It would be great if you could just tap in to other manufacturer's controls and gather data from them, but in most cases it's not practical.
Unfortunately, control and alarm networks are very specific to the manufacturer. Unlike PC's, you can't usually connect one make to another. (The only reason this is possible with the PC is that IBM was so big it created a de facto standard, along with Microsoft. But remember - even now you need different software for the Mac.)
The other main issue is that - although other control manufacturers may have networks and software for some data gathering - the systems are generally geared to running on a local PC. In some cases, there are data export facilities, but they aren't geared to rapid and efficient transfer of data remotely.
Whilst the Dicam and Barn Report daily download takes just a few seconds (because it uses small incremental compressed files), other systems use large inefficient files, which would be costly in data transfer.
But, in any case, because other manufacturers charge so much for their data networks, it's usually cheaper - and better and more reliable - to install a Dicam data gathering network alongside existing control equipment, than to use the other manufacturer's network or use their software.