

Aquatic Resource Management

Industry: Multi-Industry

Client Since: 2012

Location: Lexington, KY

Long-Term Customer Chooses LabLynx LIMS for Its New Hemp-Testing Laboratory

Overview

In 2018, when Aquatic Resources Management, LLC was looking for a laboratory information management system (LIMS) for its new hemp-testing startup, CannaBusiness Labs, LabLynx LIMS was a natural choice. After all, the consulting firm, based in Lexington, Kentucky, had been using the software for its wastewater business, Aquatic Laboratories, for close to a decade.

“We use LabLynx for basically everything” in the wastewater lab, said Rachael Craycraft, a strategy officer who works with both businesses, as well as other companies run by the parent LLC. The wastewater lab has 35 to 40 staff members and processes 5,000 to 10,000 samples a month.

With the volume that the lab handles, Craycraft said, it relies heavily on the LIMS to manage all the data and information that has to be tracked and reported. “We get audited by five different certifications every year. There would be no way that we could do all that manually without a system.”

However, when CannaBusiness Labs first opened, everything was done manually. Then, after LabLynx LIMS was implemented, the lab was able to efficiently handle much greater volume in a short period of time, as well as reduce errors, improve accounting practices, and strengthen reporting capabilities.

“We test from start to finish, from flower to final product,” Craycraft explained. “A lot of people are growing outdoors, so they’re coming to us multiple times a month to make sure that their crop isn’t getting ‘hot,’ which means that there’s too much THC in it.” THC—or tetrahydrocannabinol—is the principal psychoactive component in cannabis.

CannaBusiness Labs tests hemp, primarily for potency, for customers from 35 different states. Those customers are mainly farmers and producers, but there are also a small number who produce goods with hemp and need testing for their final products. THC gummies are an example.

Before LabLynx LIMS, errors were common

“When we started the lab, we did everything manually,” said Craycraft. “We manually produced the reports by hand. We manually logged every sample by hand. We did all the data on the computers, but then we would have to report it by hand. Until we got the LIMS up and running, it took a lot of manpower and there were a lot of errors.”

It wasn’t long until it was clear a LIMS was needed for the lab, and when that time came, the decision was made to use LabLynx again. “We decided to stay with them for CannaBusiness because we were already familiar with the layout of how things worked and the processes.”

Aquatic Resource Management

LabLynx LIMS has also prevented a lot of human error in the wastewater lab. The wastewater lab uses LabLynx for “basically everything,” said Craycraft. “We create our chain of custodies (COCs) for our field samplers since they are all remote, mainly in West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. We have the outfalls, permits, and everything set up in the system. And we were able to individually add each test that’s needed for each outfall on the permit, and then set them up whether they are once a month, twice a month, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual.”

“We are able to give those COCs to the samplers and basically they already have the paperwork, the labels, and they’re able to stick the labels on all the bottles used to collect samples,” Craycraft added. “Then when they send those samples to us, we already have all the information stored in the system. We can easily just receive each sample with the collection date and time.”

Explaining the process further, she said, “The lab folks are able to search in the system based on which tests they’re completing and easily find the samples. And they also have barcodes on them, so we’re able to scan the samples and eliminate human error that way. Then as they run their tests and enter the data into the LIMS, some data has flags or limits which are all built into the system.”

Implementing and customizing the LIMS for CannaBusiness

Since CannaBusiness is a separate business with processes very different from those used by Aquatic Laboratories, a separate version of LabLynx LIMS was purchased by the business, along with a separate subscription. Craycraft said when she now logs in to the LIMS, she has a drop-down menu where she can choose the wastewater lab or the hemp lab, which makes it really easy to pop back and forth between the two system environments.

“It’s nice because it’s the same layout, whereas if we had a completely different LIMS database for the hemp business, we would have to learn all new processes, how it works, the layout, and then we’d have to have two different systems open at the same time.”

Craycraft worked with her LabLynx representative for about nine months implementing and testing the LIMS for CannaBusiness. “One thing I love about LabLynx is that if I tell them I have a little idea, they are open to it, and then they work to make it happen,” she said.

“LabLynx worked with me day in and day out testing each individual location in the system to make sure everything worked, and if something didn’t work, LabLynx would go back to the drawing table and fix it,” Craycraft explained.

“We use LabLynx for basically everything. We get audited by five different certifications every year. There would be no way that we could do all that manually without a system.”

Aquatic Resource Management

After LabLynx, the lab was more efficient, with increased testing volume

After the LIMS implementation, the hemp-testing lab was able to take on “massive volume” of testing while reducing human error, Craycraft said. “We were honestly a lot quicker and more efficient because we weren’t having to do everything manually.”

CannaBusiness customers seem to enjoy the LIMS reporting feature as well. “I think they like the simplicity of it, because the majority of our customers are farmers, and they really don’t like to get on the computer. But they think it’s very easy that they’re able to log in, click a button, and there are the results,” she said. Customers also like getting notifications letting them know their results are ready, which eliminates a lot of phone calls.

The LIMS is integrated with the business’s accounting software, QuickBooks. LabLynx set up a user interface in the LIMS for the accounting, in addition to pricing and package information. As samples are logged, the LIMS produces invoices based on the client, pricing data, and quantity.

Another satisfied LabLynx LIMS customer

Craycraft said LabLynx LIMS provides a lot of flexibility for changing parameters in the future as business needs change. “When medicinal use passes, we would be able to add each different state’s limits in the system and apply whichever state’s limits are applicable to a sample, and then based on those limits, a sample would flag pass or fail.”

This flexibility would go a long way in meeting customer needs, Craycraft said. “If they want to sell their product in Colorado, we could apply Colorado limits. If they send us another product they plan to sell in Oregon, we could add the Oregon limits. It’s very broad, but the possibilities are endless.”

“One thing I love about LabLynx is that if I tell them I have a little idea, they are open to it, and then they work to make it happen. LabLynx worked with me day in and day out testing each individual location in the system to make sure everything worked, and if something didn’t work, LabLynx would go back to the drawing table and fix it.”