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Case Study:
FIELDALE FARMS

Achieving a 5x Return
on Annual Analytics Investment
with Diver

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Quick facts:

Organization: Fieldale Farms
Industry: Food production
Location: Baldwin, Georgia
Revenue: $1 billion
Employees: 4,800
Customer since: 2015
Website: www.fieldale.com
Solution: Diver Platform and General Ledger Advisor

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❒ ***Fieldale Farms paid back its Diver Platform product investment in one year by saving the work of two FTEs.***
- ❒ ***On an annual basis, the company currently achieves a 5x return on investment on its maintenance costs.***
- ❒ ***With the help of Diver, Fieldale Farms was able to reduce its poultry yard time by 13% and track other key metrics that help improve productivity.***
- ❒ ***Fieldale Farms' upgrade to the latest version of Diver Platform provided much faster data processing speeds.***
- ❒ ***With General Ledger Advisor, managers can answer financial questions right away rather than wait for data to be collected in a spreadsheet.***

"With Diver, you can click through and quickly see what might be right and what might be off. That allows you to make decisions and adjustments in a timelier manner."

— Tony Maturo,
Operations Controller

BACKGROUND

Fieldale Farms is a family-owned business that was founded in 1962, and it has been privately owned since 1972. The organization has grown to become one of the largest independent poultry producers in the world, producing about three-million broilers a week.

Fieldale Farms produces antibiotic-free chicken under the Springer Mountain label. The company supplies chicken to major restaurant chains such as Panera Bread and Chipotle Mexican Grill, as well as grocery stores such as Publix, Ahold, Demoulas/Market Basket and Stop & Shop.

Tony Maturo, Operations Controller

THE CHALLENGE

Fieldale Farms faces many of the same challenges others in the industry are facing right now. One challenge is that since unemployment is so low it can be hard to find the right fit in the labor market. Poultry production requires certain skills that can be difficult to find and Fieldale needs to make adjustments, such as salary increases, to set itself apart. That, of course, impacts the company's margins.

Similarly impacting margins are fluctuations in the grain markets. Corn and soymeal make up most of the feed Fieldale uses for its chickens, accounting for about 75% of the cost of the feed product. While the price of corn has been fairly steady, the price of soybeans has been rising lately.

In addition to the industry challenges, Fieldale has a lot of data it needs to keep track of within the organization. One example is yard time. This is the amount of time birds spend in line to be processed after they are brought from the farm and weighed. The longer the yard time, the more weight the birds lose, so the goal is to keep yard time down.

Fieldale Farms had a decades-old system in place, which was capable of producing reports. However, the process was far too time-consuming. The company needed something that was faster, nimbler, and could help it track the data it needs to optimize processes and improve margins.

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THE GOAL

The company's main goal was to find an analytics solution that would:

- ❒ ***Make it easier for the organization to get the information it needed and to get that information more quickly.***
- ❒ ***Provide insight into key areas such as yard time to enable it to make impactful improvements.***
- ❒ ***Allow it to analyze all of its general ledger information in real-time, from one place.***

THE SOLUTION

Fieldale Farms found the functionality it needed with Dimensional Insight's Diver Platform. The company also implemented General Ledger Advisor, an application built on Diver.

Fieldale Farms first started using General Ledger Advisor, which allows the company to view its financial data in real time, without having to wait for a monthly report to be produced. Due to the success of General Ledger Advisor, as well as previous experience with Diver Platform, Fieldale Farms soon implemented Diver as well.

"Having worked with the technology, I was sold on it," says Tony Maturo, operations controller at Fieldale Farms. "And then seeing the positive results from GL Advisor—that combination of the two pushed us to becoming full-fledged Dimensional Insight customers."

Soon after deploying Diver, Fieldale Farms upgraded to Diver Platform 7.0, which includes Dimensional Insight's Spectre technology. Spectre is built on columnar database technology, which enables faster processing times and improved performance for queries.

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— Tony Maturo, Operations Controller

THE RESULTS

With Diver, Fieldale Farms set up a daily yard time report with the goal of reducing the time that chickens are processed. That, in turn, would improve the profitability of each chicken. Using this report, Fieldale Farms was able to reduce yard time by 30 minutes, which is a 13% reduction in time.

"Diver allows us to be able to quickly identify things that look out of sort," says Maturo. "Having the information strung together in a way where instead of going and printing out four or five different reports and doing a comparison and looking for patterns, it's all there for you on one screen. With Diver, you can click through and quickly see what might be right and what might be off. That allows you to make decisions and adjustments in a timelier manner."

Fieldale Farms uses Diver to keep track of some of the same data it has always tracked but in a more efficient manner. That includes transportation data like cost per mile, internal transfers between plants and freezers, customer sales volume, and finance data. Once Fieldale Farms upgraded to Diver Platform 7.0, it was able to refresh its data more quickly. Instead of a two or three-hour process that it ran overnight, it could refresh data much more quickly, meaning the company has access to data in close to real time.

The self-service aspect of both Diver Platform and General Ledger Advisor is one of the most appealing factors to Fieldale Farms. "We're able to get information out to all of our managers as soon as the information's updated," says Maturo. In the past, he says, it took a few days to create a spreadsheet where people would then come back and ask questions about the data being presented. "Now they can drill in and see the answer to some of their questions right away," says Maturo.

All told, Fieldale Farms estimates that by using Diver and General Ledger Advisor, the organization is saving the cost of two FTEs, or about $170,000 a year. The savings mean that Fieldale Farms was able to pay back its product costs in one year, and it currently achieves a 5x return on its maintenance costs annually.

Andrew Rudeseal, Information Systems Manager

WHAT'S NEXT

Fieldale is already looking ahead at how it can use Dimensional Insight's development platform, Workbench, for a large ERP initiative it has on the horizon. The organization also thinks Dimensional Insight's Measure Factory, which centralizes control of business rules, could be the answer to its struggle to control its definitions.

"Right now, our measures are poorly defined and scattered all over the place," says Andrew Rudeseal, information systems manager at Fieldale Farms. "We really have to get that process under control and have a centralized place to define all of our metrics, get everyone on board with those metrics, and then maintain them."

The other issue Fieldale Farms faces is the fact that the more people see Diver and what it can do, the more people want to use it. So the company is looking at purchasing more licenses so more people in the organization can use Diver.

LESSONS LEARNED

While Fieldale Farms appreciates the self-service aspect of Diver Platform, the organization also realizes that it can't give users—especially those who are new to the organization—completely free rein to explore the data, as that could lead to misinterpretation. That's why Maturo and Rudeseal advocate providing users with access to certain pieces of data at the beginning and coupling that with user training before opening up full access.

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About Dimensional Insight

Dimensional Insight is the leading provider of integrated business intelligence and data management solutions. Our mission is to make organizational data accessible and usable so everyone from analysts to line of business users can get the information they need to make an informed, data-driven decision.

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