



DCT Brings Technology Edge To Vital Farms

Organic agriculture business benefiting from Scout Mobility Suite

Vital Farms, established in 2007 and based in Austin, Texas, is the nation's leading brand of pasture-raised eggs, and has a mission of bringing nutritious, "ethically-produced food to the table." They do this by partnering with more than 100 small family farms throughout the "pasture belt," following a set of well-defined farming practices, stressing the humane treatment of animals as a core principle. This is in sharp contrast with the production practices of large, corporate egg producers.

Challenge

The existing system caused inefficiencies, slowed operations and increased costs

Vital Farms had a dilemma at the end of 2016: its auditing system was largely pencil and paper-based. Vital Farms' Vice President of Quality and Compliance, Jeff Hinds, shared that the system caused inefficiencies, slowed operations and increased costs. Vital Farms wanted to automate the process and spent time vetting eight firms and suppliers before choosing Kansas City-based DCT Mobile Solutions. In DCT, Vital Farms found a like-minded company, or "partner" as Hinds said, dedicated to excellence.

The company's new DCT-designed system deployed in March 2017. Even in the first phase of its multi-phased integration plan, Vital Farms realized that the new system was a significant upgrade from the manual tracking method used previously, paying immediate dividends by streamlining operations. "We spent a long time finding out who could provide us with all the benefits, all the tech we'd need, to have an effective and efficient system," said Hinds, who oversees quality, food safety, research, development and grower support. "DCT was the only company I could check every box on. They weren't the cheapest, but they provided everything we needed and sometimes you have to pay for value." That's what Vital Farms did on this. "We knew there was a value with all the benefits, and there were even benefits we didn't expect, like optimized routing, farm pinpoints and instant communication. We got much more than I ever expected from DCT out of this technology."



SUMMARY



Customer

Vital Farms
North America

Industry

Organic Agriculture

Challenge

The existing system caused inefficiencies, slowed operations and increased costs

Solution

Replace an antiquated, paper-based process with a modern, tablet-centric solution

Results

- Improved reporting capabilities
- Enhanced supply chain management
- Improved team efficiency and communication
- Refined processes, auditing procedures and follow-up protocols

* Zebra acquired Xplore Technologies and all Xplore products in 2018.

This solution was particularly valuable to Vital Farms, given its commitment to their stakeholders. As Vital Farms President Russell Diez-Canseco shared: “We’re always looking to raise our standards. This technology allows us to better partner with our farmers to resolve their needs, bring efficiency to our crew members, and help us raise quality throughout our supply chain, ultimately putting the best possible eggs in our consumers’ hands.”

Solution

Replace an antiquated, paper-based process with a modern, tablet-centric solution

DCT Mobile Solutions’ signature product, Scout Mobility Suite, includes a Zebra rugged tablet and custom DCT software that enables Vital Farms to better manage the independent farms under its banner —spanning from Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Illinois in the Midwest to Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia in the South — and schedule on-site visits, while keeping up-to-date, easily accessible records about each. The software also gives Vital Farms the ability to create checklists, ensuring farms are compliant with USDA regulations to stay organic certified, for example. “What we did is put all of it into electronic form,” DCT Vice President Valère Palhoriès said. “By automating everything on our end, we essentially centralized all the data and made it easy to search.” The checklists, he said, are particularly relevant for Vital Farms and its agricultural producers.

“They basically have 104 points they need to verify with the farms and any answer other-than-compliant results in a corrective action checklist,” Palhoriès said. “Based on the severity of the infraction, we determine a follow-up date with the farmer and who is responsible for the follow-up, whether it’s the auditor or grower support. It was also very important for them to be able to capture pictures. If the farmer is non-compliant, then capturing a picture allows them to point out to the farmer what is specifically wrong, and provides a paper trail.”

DCT personnel toured Vital Farms’ operations to better understand the company’s auditing process, so it could tailor systems to their needs. “They made sure they understood, detail-for-detail, what we needed,” Hinds said. “I don’t know that I would have gotten that with some of my other suppliers. It would have been a telephone relationship, conference calls and webinars.”

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Russell Diez-Canseco
President, Vital Farms



Results

Better response times for corrective actions

“With this technology, standards are more consistent,” Hinds said. “Now it’s not just something written on a piece of paper that may take weeks to get into our computer system. I can immediately get data and I have real-time access. I get better response times for corrective actions, which helps the farmers be successful and it helps ensure to our consumers that we’re upholding all of our standards.”

Langston said DCT is excited about working with Vital Farms moving forward. “This has been a really enjoyable thing to help a company that is doing something that, collectively, we all agree with,” he said. Hinds echoed those sentiments of partnering with DCT. “We got the right company” he said. “It’s not always about who can do the job for the lowest cost. You get what you pay for, and we’ve been impressed with DCT’s commitment. It’s exactly what you want from someone you’re in business with.”



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