

## Dale Farm

Enterprise Resource Planning

**Region**

Northern Ireland

**Sector**

Dairy



### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Dale Farm Limited manufactures and markets a wide range of dairy products covering milk, cream, milk powders, cheese, butter, dairy spreads, yogurts, ice cream and desserts. The company operates in the UK, Irish and international markets in its own Dale Farm, Spelga, Dromona, Rowan Glen, and Loseley brands and major multiple own label. The company has a group turnover approaching £300 million with over 1100 employees and comprises of 5 manufacturing locations in Ireland, Scotland and England.

### THE PROBLEM

Dale Farm Limited had over 20 legacy systems, a mixture of software packages and in-house developed solutions. Its parent company, United Dairy Farmers, also operated a significant number of packaged and custom solutions and the group decided to introduce standard processes and implement a group wide generic ERP system.

Microsoft Dynamics NAV from Sysco was chosen because it was felt that the breadth of functionality was a cost-effective solution for diverse business requirements. Also, the customisation capabilities of Dynamics NAV allowed Dale Farm to make changes easily and quickly. This was very important to the group because there were specific dairy industry requirements that would not be met through a standard ERP solution.

*"Two key areas we initially thought may cause us problems were modifications for the milk distribution side of the business and the interfaces with the legacy packages."*

*David Brown, Dale Farm*

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## THE SOLUTION

Sysco demonstrated that they had the local support and implementation capabilities for a company the size of Dale Farm and promised to grow with them as the group expanded. Initially Sysco introduced the financial modules independently. All legacy financial ledgers were replaced, and new interfaces were built throughout, integrating the new modern systems with the legacy distribution systems. As the subsidiaries were merged their financial ledgers were consolidated. A phased approach was then taken to rolling out the distribution modules. Sysco started with the chilled foods sector of the company and then embarked on the Milk distribution business.

The business models and procedures established during the previous implementations enabled the subsequent roll out of Dynamics NAV to Dale Farm Kendal, Rowan Glen and Parmalat to be successfully completed, including the development of new EDI messages and an interface to third party distribution organisations.

Sysco consultants working with Dale Farm were involved from the beginning, setting up the prototype Dynamics NAV system, defining existing processes and mapping these to Navision. This also involved the design, development and implementation of Dale Farm specific requirements to Navision. The consultants led key workshops to agree system configuration and processes, and then led initial training of users and hand holding during "go-live".

## BENEFITS

One of the benefits of Microsoft Dynamics 365 is its uniformity across all modules making end user training a straight forward task. Sysco provided the bulk of user training on site. Dale Farm has been able to roll out training throughout the company utilising in-house trainers. Dale Farm now has one integrated ERP application, with Dynamics NAV allowing them to introduce standard business processes across the group, which in turn has improved data integrity and efficiency with reduced duplication and effort.

Microsoft Dynamics 365 has also helped to reduce costs by increasing the use of IT in numerous functions within the business, introducing more automation and e-commerce, and reducing manual effort and paper handling. Moving to a common hardware platform and operating system has also reduced IT support and maintenance costs.

"In the end both were big successes and enabled us to rollout the system in a controlled manner. Sysco made the required modifications providing a modern system with the necessary integration between functional modules."

David Brown, Dale Farm

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Another significant benefit from the system is the increased visibility and drill down capabilities. By providing more accurate, comprehensive and timely information Dale Farm now have better decision-making capabilities. Using a Microsoft product brings several key benefits most notably the reduction of risk by moving from legacy systems to the world's largest software company.

The flexibility of Dynamics NAV should not be underestimated, and a key benefit is the ability to adapt and customise functionality to suit the ever-changing business requirements of an organisation like Dale Farm. Also, the system has been designed to scale up with increased volumes and capacity with business growth and acquisition. Dale Farm required a stable solution that would support and grow with their business.

*Sysco have provided more than a solution they have provided a partnership.*

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