

USDA FARM SERVICES AGENCY



HYPERION PROVIDES QUICK DATA ACCESS, ACCURATE REPORTING
AND SIGNIFICANT TIME AND LABOR SAVINGS

CUSTOMER
STORY



U.S. Government Agency with the mission to stabilize farm income, help farmers conserve land and water resources, provide credit to farmers and ranchers, and help farmers recover from the effects of disaster.

AT A GLANCE

Company

U.S. Government Agency administers programs to assist the agricultural community

Industry

Government

Product

Hyperion Performance Suite

Challenge

- Employees were held accountable for budgets, but lacked timely budget reports
- Replace reporting system that delivered paper reports with six-week old data

Solution

- Local office managers access some 200 reports, all with fresh data
- Reports help manage loan payments, expenses, vendor payments and lease agreements

Result

- Improved information enables better decisions to guide the agency
- FSA is better able to manage farmers' debt
- More is done with fewer headcount
- Significant savings from not mailing paper reports

**HYPERION PERFORMANCE SUITE IS OUR FUTURE,
OUR FLAGSHIP SOFTWARE, AND IS WHAT RUNS THIS OFFICE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE'D BE WITHOUT IT.**

Jeffrey O'Connell

*CORE Data Warehouse Project Manager and Accountant,
Accounting Systems and Planning*

SOLUTION DELIVERS AGENCY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In 1999, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) implemented a new CORE financial accounting system and decided to concurrently implement a new data warehouse to provide decision-maker access to financial information. The data warehouse was designed, with the help of Hyperion's Partner, Advanced DataTools, to meet growing analysis and reporting needs driven by FSA's strategic goals, by eGov initiatives, and by Federal government management reporting mandates.

Using Hyperion Performance Suite and the data warehouse, nearly 1,200 accountants and financial managers at all levels of the FSA now manage their own program and payroll budgets. They can now quickly respond to a producer's request for detailed financial data, including even the details behind a 1099 report received by the producer.

In October 2002, data warehouse access was deployed to more than 10,000 staff in 2,540 US counties. Over the next several years, online access to the Hyperion solution will be available to more than 2.3 million producers.

AGENCY NEEDS OUTGREW FORMER SYSTEM

The Farm Service Agency administers, manages, and controls legislation passed by Congress to assist the agricultural community. FSA provides program support to producers and the administrative support needed to maintain those programs. This legislation includes loans and subsidies to producers, conservation programs, price and inventory stabilization programs, foreign export of agricultural products, foreign and domestic food donations, and disaster relief.

FSA's Financial Management Division goals for 2001-2005 include:

1. Allowing customers to share data and receive services electronically via the Internet
2. Improving the quality, availability, and speed with which information is shared with the public, other agencies, and private sector entities
3. Having a financial information system that can produce auditable financial statements and provide reliable and data for decision-making
4. Fully implementing the DCI Act of 1996 to maximize debt collection
5. Implementing an automated HR system that increases the usefulness and availability of HR information for workforce planning/reporting and decreases the resources required for personnel administration

Employees in state and county offices were held accountable for their budgets, but were lacking timely budget management reports. Budget and fund status reports for states and counties were usually more than two months old. Headquarters held a significant portion of a local office's budget in reserve until late in the fiscal year, when any excess would be allocated elsewhere. Detailed payroll information was simply not available. County office expenditures could be reported incorrectly, and a county could be told they were over budget, but they had no way access details. Producers' farm loan debt information was scattered across multiple systems with no consolidated view of outstanding balances and payment history.

The Commodity Credit Corporation had no way to get needed reports directly from the CORE financial system. Instead, data was entered into the CORE financial system then transferred to a mainframe reporting system, which generated text files that were downloaded into Lotus 1-2-3, where macros were used to produce the required reports.

The old reporting system was antiquated, unfriendly, and required specialized programmers to generate reports. Ad hoc queries had to be programmed by a handful of developers who also developed and

maintained approximately 300 standard reports. State and county hardcopy loan summary reports containing old data were mailed every six weeks.

PERFORMANCE SUITE DELIVERS INFORMATION FROM ROBUST DATA WAREHOUSE

The data warehouse and Hyperion solution were designed and implemented by Advanced DataTools (ADTC), a Hyperion consulting and training partner that provides consulting, design, implementation services and training for enterprise data warehouse systems. "Without ADTC's invaluable assistance to our data warehouse efforts, FSA would be years behind on our current deployment schedule. The personnel from ADTC are well-trained and meet FSA's needs for time and cost savings in our complex data warehouse efforts," states Jeffrey O'Connell, CORE Data Warehouse Project Manager and Accountant, Accounting Systems and Planning. "We greatly appreciate all the help that ADTC has given us. Each year we find ourselves moving forward in amazement at the progress that we have made. ADTC was giving critical assistance all along the way."

The FSA data warehouse (SUN E6500 with 12 CPU's, 6GB of memory, and 264 disks (2.4TB) using an IBM Informix database server) is loaded with fresh data every night, after which Performance Suite generates over 200 new reports. Most decision-makers find these pre-built reports ideal for their needs.

With Performance Suite, local office managers view a variety of reports empowering them to track loan payments, expenses, ensure vendors are paid on time and do future projections of lease agreements. State offices access pre-built payroll reports that are QA'd by accounting staff, compared with the General Journal and OMDR (modified detail record) and delivered within 10 days of payroll.

At headquarters, Performance Suite is used to track national wage and time reporting, and perform cost benefit analyses. Users immediately identify budget and payroll coding errors. Employees can change their W-4 and request to see the detail of the changes in

their payroll within days rather than six or eight months later, as used to be the case.

New data marts are under development. They include a Payments Data Mart to consolidate and track producer payments, and a Public Access Data Mart to allow producers online access to loan information and FSA services and programs.

**BETTER INFORMATION RESULTS
IN BETTER DECISIONS**

Improved information enables better decisions to guide the agency. FSA is better able to manage farmers' debt. State and County Executive Directors manage their budgets with data that is only one day old.

According to Jeffrey O'Connell, "Hyperion Performance Suite is our future, our flagship software, and is what runs this office. I don't know where we'd be without it."

More than 1,200 decision-makers regularly use Performance Suite. In October of 2002, the data warehouse will be rolled out to the remaining counties (2,540 in all, with over 10,000 staff). Reports are routinely generated for managers at all levels, Congress, and other agencies. Employees have been trained to use Performance Suite to create reports and then use Performance Suite, or export data to spreadsheets, for analysis.

As employees retire, they are not being replaced, yet due to the data warehouse and Performance Suite, the workload remains manageable despite these smaller staff levels. Using Performance Suite, monthly, quarterly, semi-monthly, and annual fiscal closings of key financial periods are completed on time. Significant savings in mailing and mailroom personnel expense have been realized.



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