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# Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative (MDFC) Implements Cloud Based Equity and Patronage System

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*"We now have a product hosted in the cloud, always refreshed, and will be supported for decades."*

*-John Wieser, IT Director, MDFC*



# Identifying a Path Forward

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## About

Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative, a **sugar beet processing company established in 1972**, sought to **modernize its equity and patronage system**, which was previously managed on an outdated IBM platform.

Approximately 15-20 years ago, MDFC began searching for a comprehensive solution to **manage shareholder accounting, equity, patronage, and payments for sugar beet deliveries**. Initially, the market offered limited and outdated options that did not meet their modern needs. Throughout this time, MDFC explored potential options but each time neither the technology nor the timing worked out.



## Existing Business Challenges

- **Aging** accounting system for shareholders.
- **Reliance on IT Director** for shareholder system maintenance.
- **Disparate systems** with manual processes.
- **Lack of self-service** capabilities for shareholders.
- **Error** correcting/data handling.
- Information can be **difficult to access**.
- **Lack of real-time** data availability.



# Engaging the Right Partner

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## Partnership

MDFC's long-term partner, Stoneridge Software, connected them with their subsidiary **Levridge**, who emerged as a **viable option for developing a solution**. **MDFC and Levridge embarked on a joint development journey**, allowing them to customize the software to their specific processes and requirements.

This **collaborative approach, while time intensive, promised a robust and a lasting solution** for decades to come.



## Levridge Equity and Patronage Solution

The implementation was designed to be **cloud-based, ensuring continuous updates and real-time accuracy**. Over nearly a year of testing, the team ensured that all processes, from equity management to sugar payments, were accurate and reliable.

- **Key steps in the implementation included:**
  - **Joint development** and customization.
  - Extensive **testing and validation** through dual systems.
  - Transitioning all equity and patronage **data to the new system**.
  - Ensuring **cloud-based hosting** for real-time updates and accessibility.



# Improving and Modernizing



## Challenges and Solutions

### System Modernization:

Address user fatigue, ease of executing, and technical obsolescence.

#### Challenge:

- Outdated IBM system
- Green screens
- Limited user support

#### Solution:

- Cloud-based
- Modern interface easy to use and recall
- Ongoing support

### Data Management:

Streamlined management of voluminous data from multiple sources, and 1099 patronage forms.

#### Challenge:

- Difficulty managing data and 1099 patronage forms
- Varying data sources and changing regulations

#### Solution:

- Streamlined data categorization and compliance

### Team Capacity:

Forward progress and communication essential to ensuring project success.

#### Challenge:

- Pressure from dual responsibilities in maintaining two systems

#### Solution:

- Continuous meetings
- Incremental progress to manage workloads



# Maximizing the Benefits

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## Outcomes

- **Modern Solution:** The cooperative now has a system that meets all specific requirements and will be supported for decades.
- **Real-time Processing:** The cloud-based system ensures real-time data processing and updates, enhancing operational efficiency.
- **User Satisfaction:** The modern interface and reliable support have improved user satisfaction and reduced operational stress.
- **Future-readiness:** The system is designed to adapt to future changes, ensuring long-term viability and compliance.
- **Next steps:** Provide members with access to their own tax forms through a self-service portal.



## Summary

The Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative implementation demonstrates the benefits of a collaborative development approach in implementing a modern software solution.

By partnering with Levridge, MDFC **successfully transitioned from an aging Equity and Patronage system to a modern, efficient, and user-friendly platform**, setting a strong foundation for future growth and adaptability for decades to come.

