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Improving efficiency of data collection - linking with agricultural accounts software

Farm Business Survey in England

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Background

- The Farm Business Survey (FBS) in England has been run annually since 1936.
- The survey has always been undertaken by an external contractor run on behalf of the government.
- Regular retendering of the contract (around every 5 years) takes place, with the latest procurement exercise 2021/22.
- The 2021/22 procurement presented an opportunity to reassess requirements and work with potential suppliers to establish and define solutions which would change and improve how the data are collected.

Reasons for change

- The existing FBS Excel data collection systems had been in place for around 2 decades.
- While they has done their job well, they were complex, unwieldy and increasingly outdated.
- There were concerns that, in the long term, the systems would become more difficult to support and maintain.

Procurement requirements

- Emphasis on innovative approaches with bidders actively encouraged to propose and use an alternative, more efficient systems
- For example, using existing management accounting software, cloud based or data warehouse storage options.

The successful solution

Promar International were awarded the contract with a bid that included:

- Use of **Agstute** Accounts Package.

The package utilises XERO for financial information, this will be complemented by Figured for farm technical information.

- Use of scanning software for invoices and bank statements to simplify and speed up data gathering.
- A overall more streamlined, centralised approach to data collection.

Outcomes

Over the span of the contract it is anticipated that the changes will lead to a number of efficiencies including:



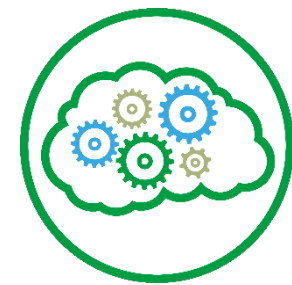
Reduction in
data collection
time



Improved,
speedier
data quality
assurance



Production of
“agile” easily
queried
datasets



Further
opportunity
to automate
data



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Promar International

Who are we?

- Farm Business Consultancy with over 60 years' experience
- Part of the Genus PLC group
- Providing consultancy and financial analysis services to private and corporate clients





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Farm Business Survey

Data Collection - Sources



Electronic
accounts

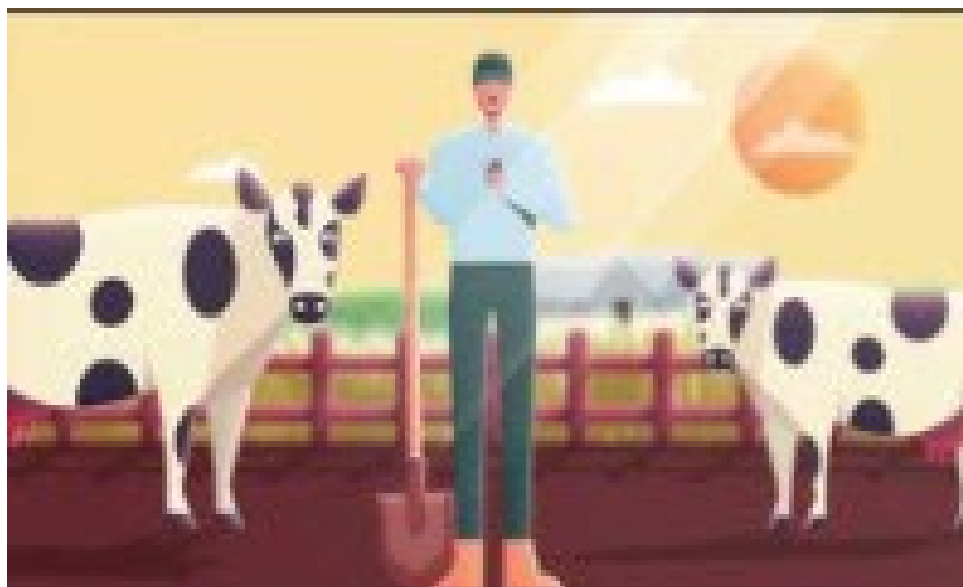


Paper statements/invoices



Electronic accounts

Agstute links Xero and Figured to give farmers real-time data on gross margins, yields, P&L



This also enables us to capture data for the Farm Business Survey via a Cloud system, enabling earlier data capture and less time needed from the farmer



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Dairy Cows Tracker

Actuals from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

[Tools](#) [View Transactions](#)

Grazing Area (ha)	0	Value on Hand	£212,900	Average Opening Weight	552.82 kg
Average Stock	221	Calving (%)	115.24	Average Closing Weight	554.24 kg

Tracker: Dairy Cows | Annual | Monthly | Detailed | Hide empty rows: | QTY | \$

Stock classes	Full Year Actual											Target Closing	Variation
	Opening	Birth	Purchase	Aging In	Transfer In	Aging Out	Transfer Out	Sale	Death	Reconciling	Closing		
Breeding Bulls	3		2								5	0	-5
Dairy Cows	210				60	-37					231	0	-231
Dairy Calves	0	242					-6	-226	-10		0	0	0
Cull Cows	0			37				-37			0	0	0
Totals	213	242	2	37	60	-37	-6	-263	-12	-	236	-	-236
Unreconciled			✓					✓					

Dairy Calves Sale

The values in this table are read only

✓ Sales Reconciled

Transaction Date	Payment Date	Quantity	Avg. weight	Amount	Notes	Xero Status	Per kg	Per Head	Total
06/06/2022	06/07/2022	10	kg/head	£ 3,260	Calves	Imported	0	326	3,260
11/07/2022	11/07/2022	11	kg/head	£ 3,450	11 Calves	Imported	0	313.64	3,450
29/07/2022	26/09/2022	2	kg/head	£ 400	2 calves	Imported	0	200	400
04/08/2022	04/08/2022	3	kg/head	£ 800	3 Reared Calves	Imported	0	266.67	800

Manual entries
for births and
transfers
between
herds/enterprises

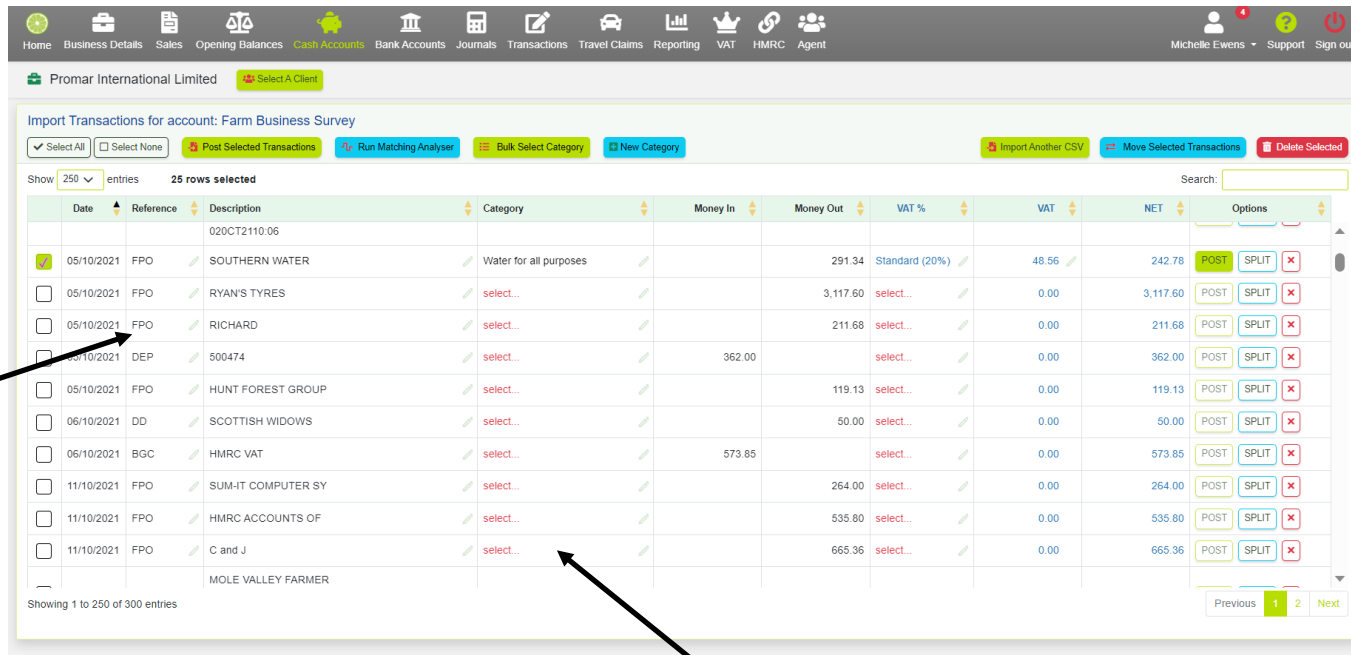
Result: Average herd size and data such as costs per litre of milk or forage grazing rate readily available

Xero transactions imported automatically showing cow sales/purchases



Raw Data

Piloting intelligent scanning to scan bank statements and code them to produce accounts analysis.
Client can access analysed account if wanted.



Home Business Details Sales Opening Balances Cash Accounts Bank Accounts Journals Transactions Travel Claims Reporting VAT HMRC Agent Michelle Ewens Support Sign out

Promar International Limited Select A Client

Import Transactions for account: Farm Business Survey

Select All Select None Post Selected Transactions Run Matching Analyser Bulk Select Category New Category Import Another CSV Move Selected Transactions Delete Selected

Show 250 entries 25 rows selected Search:

Date	Reference	Description	Category	Money In	Money Out	VAT %	VAT	NET	Options
		02OCT2110 06							
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	05/10/2021	FPO SOUTHERN WATER	Water for all purposes		291.34	Standard (20%)	48.56	242.78	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	05/10/2021	FPO RYAN'S TYRES	select...		3,117.60	select...	0.00	3,117.60	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	05/10/2021	FPO RICHARD	select...		211.68	select...	0.00	211.68	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	05/10/2021	DEP 500474	select...	362.00		select...	0.00	362.00	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	05/10/2021	FPO HUNT FOREST GROUP	select...		119.13	select...	0.00	119.13	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/10/2021	DD SCOTTISH WIDOWS	select...		50.00	select...	0.00	50.00	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	06/10/2021	BGC HMRC VAT	select...	573.85		select...	0.00	573.85	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/10/2021	FPO SUM-IT COMPUTER SY	select...		264.00	select...	0.00	264.00	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/10/2021	FPO HMRC ACCOUNTS OF	select...		535.80	select...	0.00	535.80	POST SPLIT X
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/10/2021	FPO C and J	select...		665.36	select...	0.00	665.36	POST SPLIT X
		MOLE VALLEY FARMER							

Showing 1 to 250 of 300 entries Previous 1 2 Next

Statement
automatically
read from
pdf, scan or
email

Bespoke categories to match FBS
requirements. System remembers
codes for each supplier



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The future: Versatile Data Analysis



Agstute
Powered by Xero and Figured

Raw data and electronic accounts feed into Agstute via a data warehouse, where calculations can be performed to achieve the required data points.





Challenges

- Relies on high quality inputting of data by farmers
- Development of a platform to work with different electronic accounts (ie not just Xero) will require first a data warehouse to capture the physical and financial data, then a bespoke platform to perform calculations, building on what Figured does for Xero presently
- Different units and other idiosyncrasies of software mean at present we do not expect to eliminate human judgment which limits the cost effectiveness



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Any Questions?

