



Milking RF Data Collection for All It's Worth: World Dairy Expo & Pragma Systems Make the Right Mooves

The Client: World Dairy Expo

World Dairy Expo (WDE) is a nonprofit organization that serves the agricultural industry, planning and staging one of the world's premiere dairy cattle and trade shows. In 2007, the Madison, Wisconsin-based organization logged more than 67,000 attendees at the Expo (www.worlddairyexpo.com), including 2,967 international participants from 90 countries; 707 commercial exhibitors; and, roughly, 2,500 cattle exhibited from 7 breeds. The WDE is recognized as a member of Tradeshow Week Magazine's Top 100 trade events, ranking No. 42 in 2007.

The Expo, which originated in October 1967, offers what is widely recognized as the global cattle industry's most elite combination of dairy cattle and exhibits. North America's top dairy cattle compete for seven breed shows at the event, culminating in the selection of the World Dairy Expo Supreme Champion, and herd owners have the opportunity to bid at five different cattle auctions. The WDE is also home to the world's largest dairy-focused trade show in the world. More than 700 companies from all over the world exhibit at WDE.

The Challenge: Round Up the Right Data

The WDE has utilized Pragma System's Telnet software since 2003, when the Expo began collecting dairy-cattle show results with remote RF barcode readers in real time, directly from the show ring. This approach allowed the Expo to provide rapid, accurate show results to interested parties around the world via the Internet within minutes of the completion of specific rounds of judging – vital data, given that the value of dairy cattle breeding stock and bull semen can rise or fall based on the results at this prestigious dairy cattle show.

In 2006, the hard drive on WDE's Windows NT server failed during the organization's set up for the show. The Expo's systems-support provider immediately repaired the server for the show but, in the end, management decided the Expo did not want to support an older operating system.

The WDE team then attempted to move the system to the organization's main Windows 2003 server, but found that the console display no longer appeared on the server desktop as it had on the NT system. This display is, in fact, critical because it lets WDE administrative personnel in the office observe the data-entry actions of volunteers collecting data at the show ring, giving them an opportunity to identify and deal with any exceptions or errors that might occur during the show.

Faced with the need to ensure that the organization's real-time show results were comprehensive and accurate, the WDE urgently required a solution that would allow Telnet users access to the desktop displays of its newer operating system.

The Choice: WDE Roped In Pragma Systems

Having received "excellent support" in the form of a custom DLL library for the group's initial 2003 Pragma Systems installation, "we turned to Pragma Systems again," reports Luther Johnson at JVL Systems, the Expo's external IT support team. "Pragma worked with us intensively over the next 18 months to understand and find a solution to our dilemma." The resulting solution? A Windows Vista server with a customized version of Pragma's Telnet Server installed to provide all of their remote connectivity needs with each of their devices.

"As an applications developer, I rely on software developers and support to make the systems platform work, so how all this functions is somewhat mysterious," explains Luther. "What I *can* say is that WDE is exceptionally pleased with the support, commitment and value we have received from Pragma Systems. They're an active partner in maintaining the World Dairy Expo's status as North America's premier dairy cattle show – and it has been a pleasure to work alongside professionals who pushed relentlessly to help us find a solution that met our particular challenge."

Sandra Horn, WDE's cattle-show coordinator, concurs. "Problem solved," she asserts. "Pragma's products, creativity and hard work mean our remote barcode readers continue to provide accurate, real-time show results to our followers around the world."

One more benefit Luther flags: The WDE's system-support provider is no longer required to keep the NT server system working and, can, instead, concentrate on the newer Windows Vista system. The bottom line? The WDE continues to enjoy the mirrored-screen functionality of its remote data-collection approach, avoiding the expense of rewriting its system.

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 - Allows **secure file transfers**; and
 - Provides consistent, **reliable application delivery**
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