



Smarter
Location
Intelligence

Case Study Ravensdown Fertiliser

Smart Maps gives Ravensdown a valuable competitive advantage



In June 2013 Ravensdown launched Smart Maps, the latest feature of their 'My Ravensdown' hosted application for farmers. Collaboratively designed and built by GBS, Smart Maps is a mapping tool and information repository that lets farmers see their records, test results, nutrient plans and fertiliser placement, all in one place. To the best of Ravensdown's knowledge, it's the only fully integrated geospatial farm management tool of its kind in the world.

BACKGROUND

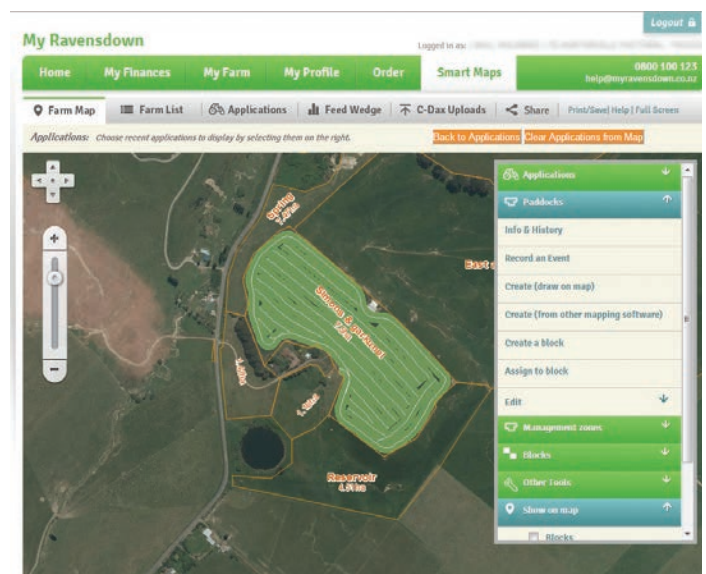
A co-operative company 100% owned by farmer-shareholders who are also customers, Ravensdown supplies close to half of New Zealand's agriculture fertiliser. For several years Ravensdown has been making farm management easier with their hosted application 'My Ravensdown', which gives farmers access to information about their interactions with Ravensdown. My Ravensdown has been evolving steadily over the years, as new technology has become available.

An early addition to My Ravensdown was a map viewer. It had minimal functionality, but was enough to give farmers a glimpse of what might be possible with a map-based tool. Mark McAtamney, Chief Information Officer at Ravensdown, says the adding the viewer started a torrent of farmer feedback.

"We'd teased our customers with the simple map viewing function, which resulted in a raft of suggestions about how to make it better. We listened to all the ideas and created a vision and scope of work for Smart Maps."

Launched at Fieldays in June 2013, Smart Maps (and C-Dax) received a great response and was awarded the Fieldays International Innovation Merit award - C-Dax for the Smart Control with Smart Maps system.

Smart Maps is now the star feature of My Ravensdown. A comprehensive farm mapping and fertiliser management tool, the solution was designed, built and implemented by GBS.



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THE CHALLENGE

The relationship between Ravensdown and GBS began in 2006 with RavTrak, a solution for tracking on-road off-road truck mileage. GBS also supported the 'proof of placement' solution - implemented before they became involved with Ravensdown - that allowed Ravensdown customer-shareholders to see where and how fertiliser had been spread on their farms. RavTrak was delivered on time and Ravensdown were highly impressed by the consistent quality of the GBS team's work. Consequently, GBS was named Ravensdown's preferred supplier of geospatial services.

Smart Maps took nine months to design and build. Project challenges included collaboration with other suppliers, integration with the Ravensdown enterprise system and finding solutions for various browser compatibility issues. The GBS team worked closely with Ravensdown during the creation process to ensure the grand vision for Smart Maps was more than achieved.



KEY BENEFITS OF MY RAVENSDOWN SMART MAPS

- Up-to-date aerial map of every Ravensdown customer's farm, based on data from Terralink International
- Farmers can accurately draw and name their paddocks on the aerial map
- Fertiliser applications by trucks, aircraft and C-Dax spreaders are automatically recorded for each paddock
- Farmers can record farm events for each paddock, such as cultivation, irrigation, seeding or spraying
- Feed wedge information can be displayed for the whole farm or any paddock (a pasture feed wedge gives a visual picture of the current pasture situation in relation to the paddock's average pasture cover)
- Farmers can see nutrient summaries by paddock, block or management zone
- Soil test results can be viewed and interrogated on the map - including trend graphs of nutrients from the same test position
- Fertiliser plans that are designed by Ravensdown staff can be viewed on the map

THE GBS SOLUTION

Smart Maps has been enthusiastically welcomed by Ravensdown customer-shareholders. After just two months, more than 1000 farmers have 'drawn up' their paddocks, which is a strong indication they're getting value from the new tool.

"I've only heard positive responses from users, who range from large corporate farms to small family farms. Smart Maps has given us a market advantage and has become a cornerstone of our negotiations with new prospects. When they see how the level of functionality we give them compares to our competitors, it's easier to convert them into customers."

Mark says working with GBS added real value to the development process. When opportunities arose to make the solution better than the original scope of work, they were ardently seized.

"The GBS Smart Maps solution has more than lived up to our expectations. The GBS team took the time to understand our business really well and they're very good at coming back to us with ideas. They don't just develop exactly what we ask for, they think it through and add value by making features more intuitive and user-friendly. During the process of creating Smart Maps, they often came up with things we hadn't thought of."

Smart Maps builds on all the work GBS has undertaken with the Ravensdown team since 2006 and considerably extends Ravensdown's geospatial capability, creating a broad platform for on-going innovation.

