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Nick Eyres
Elders, Geraldton, WA

SUPPORTING GROWERS WITH TECHNOLOGY

CHALLENGE
The Elders agronomy team aims to provide a high-quality service to their clients that helps these growers be as profitable as possible. Elders were looking for a digital platform that enables their agronomists to provide a consistent service where agronomists can collaborate with their growers. Elders also wanted to make sure that any software they implemented would be useful for their clients to adopt as well.

SOLUTION
Elders decided to implement Agworld across their branch network and give their agronomists access to the Agworld platform. They have also been able to get an increasing number of their clients to join them in collaborating on the same platform.

RESULT
By implementing Agworld, Elders have been able to guarantee continuity in their agronomy service provision, even when agronomists might relocate to other branches, due to the continuous availability of historical agronomic data for all agronomists. Elders’ grower clients now have access to this same data set created by their agronomists and are able to use this to create their own farm records, budgets and farm performance reports.
Rural Service Provider with a long history

Since 1839, Elders has been an integral part of Australia’s rural business landscape and its 180 years of experience clearly shows in the strong relationships and focus on innovation that Elders displays today. Elders provides services from finance and banking to real estate, wool, grain and livestock trading as well as agricultural inputs, rural merchandise and agronomic advice. Elders is always at the forefront of new technology that can help them, and Australia’s growers, improve their results.

Implementing new agricultural technology is something that requires dedication throughout an organisation and Elders has been very active in getting everyone involved. Graham Page, Head of Elders’ Technical Services, words it as follows: “AgTech is starting to play a key role in agriculture as we see data becoming a powerful decision-making tool. Farm management systems like Agworld make the process of sharing detailed information simple. We realised the advantages of digital collaboration quite a few years ago and are keen to be able to extend these benefits to our grower network as well. Both through our agronomists and advisors using Agworld, as well as our grower clients themselves using Agworld together with their Elders agronomist.”

Grower focused agronomy

Elders started implementing Agworld in its agronomy services in 2012 and have rapidly expanded the footprint of its digital agronomy services since. Elders agronomist Cameron Smith, based in Northam, WA, now uses Agworld on a daily basis. Cameron: “Growers really look for someone to assist them with their decision-making processes when it comes to cropping. This can be regarding their rotation, inputs usage or soil-fertility.”

“I moved to the Elders Northam branch from the Elders Merredin branch about 12 months ago, but because all our grower data is in Agworld, I was able to hit the ground running here. I see that as a big advantage of using tools like...”
Agworld: there is no need to call people for information or having to guess anything: I have all the data I need available right here on my iPad. Our growers really appreciate this as well: they know that their local Elders Agronomist has access to their historical data on Agworld, so there is no chance of someone missing critical bits of information.

This is also where I see a big opportunity for our growers moving forward, because we keep such detailed plans and recommendations of what happens on every farm and in every field, growers will be able to capitalise on this and use this as a basis to create farm records from. I know how much easier it makes my life to have data and records readily available when I need them; our growers can experience the exact same benefits through Agworld, and I am keen to help them realise this. Just knowing the exact history of each field and being able to see exactly what is happening where, makes a big difference to everyone involved.

Helping growers plan their season

Agronomist Nick Eyres, with Elders Geraldton, is equally passionate about using digital tools in his daily job as an agronomist. Coming from a farming background, Nick now works with a range of different crops from cereals, canola and lupins to different legumes and sometimes even grapes. Nick finds however that, irrespective of the crop someone grows, technology is starting to excite them more and more: “We see a lot of noise from blue-sky stuff like drones, but on the ground it’s hard to make things work and make the numbers add up. That’s why many growers are interested in Agworld, because they can see it is already working and delivering benefits.”

“I really enjoy planning for my growers on Agworld; it’s easy to do and I end up with a paper plan that is a very professional document that I can give straight to my grower. Or, better yet – those that are Agworld users themselves receive it straightaway in Agworld and are able to use it from there. And if a grower has a question, I can answer it by just putting it in the plan, which really makes everyone’s life a lot easier. The fact that they can see exactly what they’ve got to do and, once they’ve done it, turn this into actual farm records, saves everyone time.”

“During the season I also create all my recommendations in Agworld and am able to send these straight to my growers, which is very helpful for both myself as well as the growers. It shows them the observations I made and the basic input recommendations complete with quantities of product that need to be ordered, mixing orders and so on. Through Agworld I basically give them a hand with how the whole thing works at a very swift click of the button.”

Farm records made easy

When it comes to growers collaborating with their agronomist on Agworld, both Cameron and Nick are of the same opinion: “Agworld has an awesome capacity to help our growers with plans, budgets and records, but it is a matter of quality-in, quality-out. Meaning that growers have to ensure that whatever they input into Agworld is of high quality, or they risk getting low quality output.
as well. But this is where we can help – as we create a lot of data already through planning and recommendations and all the grower has to do is convert this to an actual.”

Nick adds to this: “Agworld recently came up to Geraldton to run a training day with our growers, which was really good. We had an awesome crowd and really great interaction from our growers. That to me really showed how much interest there is from our growers in getting involved in digital agriculture. And on the other hand, it also shows that growers don’t have to worry about Agworld ‘being too difficult’; between these kind of training days and their free support service based in Perth, I haven’t heard anyone not being positive about their service yet!”

Cameron concludes with: “We all know that Australian agriculture has to keep becoming more productive, just like it has done over the past 100 years. It’s platforms like Agworld that can deliver this increase in productivity for both us and our growers, it’s just a matter of getting involved!”

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