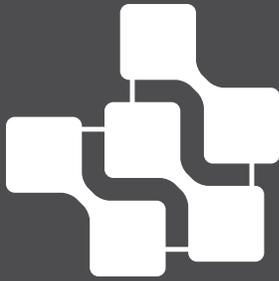
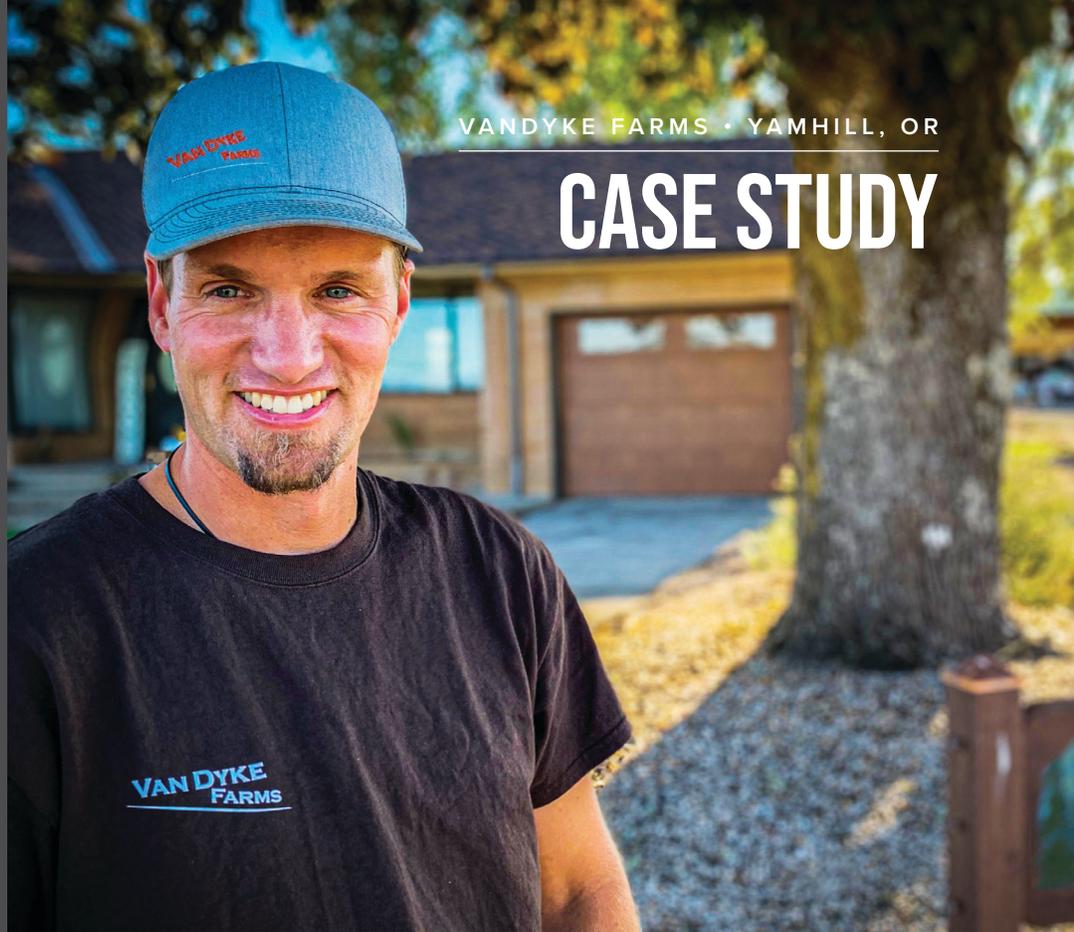


CASE STUDY



Agworld
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Van Dyke Farms

TYPE	Permanent & row crops
LOCATION	Yamhill, OR
CROPS	Grass seed, blueberries, hazelnuts
SIZE	4,000 acres
EMPLOYEES	6

"To me, this is the most important benefit that Agworld offers us: Agworld helps eliminate unnecessary risks in the input application process."

Ben VanDyke
VanDyke Farms, Yamhill, OR

**VAN DYKE
FARMS**

MITIGATING INPUT APPLICATION RISKS

CHALLENGE

When Ben VanDyke started to grow food crops next to his existing grass seed operation, he found that he needed a better way to track his input applications for certification purposes. VanDyke Farms is also surrounded in the immediate area by sensitive crops, which necessitates a high degree of caution when spraying and accurate input application tracking to prevent spray drift from occurring

SOLUTION

When VanDyke Farms' inputs supplier, Valley Agronomics, launched their Platinum Precision Subscription with Agworld at the heart of it, Ben VanDyke decided to subscribe to this program.

RESULT

By implementing Agworld in their operation, VanDyke Farms have been able to improve their workflow and record keeping ability. They now have accurate digital records available of applications performed on their farm which they can utilize in a range of situations.



Producing grass seed in the Pacific Northwest

Ben VanDyke is a third-generation farmer in Yamhill, Oregon. After taking over from his father and uncle in the early 2000's, Ben now runs the family operation comprising several thousand acres of land of which 20% is irrigated. The farm used to only produce grass seed until Ben introduced blueberries in 2009 and added hazelnuts in 2015. Ben explains: "I wanted to diversify our operation a bit and we do have some soil that has more potential than what we were doing with it with grass seed. Ten years ago, blueberries were the hot new commodity in the area and, although that has changed a bit now, they are still more profitable than grass seed. Hazelnuts are the new up-and-coming crop in our area now so, after starting to plant trees four years ago, we are looking forward to our first harvest this year."

In 2015 Ben's retailer Valley Agronomics introduced their Platinum Precision Subscription (PPS) program, which immediately caught Ben's attention. "There were a couple of key parts of this program that really appealed to me as I could see that they would deliver immediate advantages to our operation. With Agworld at the core of the PPS program, we would be able to fulfil all our record keeping and application tracking needs, while the NDVI imagery component would help us with applying growth regulators on our grass seed."



Utilizing different types of NDVI imagery

"Grass that is grown through to seed easily lodges later in the season, so controlling its height is absolutely critical. With the help of NDVI Imagery, we now apply the growth regulators with variable rates, depending on the biomass measured in each spot. For these applications, we receive high-resolution imagery once a season from Valley Ag through the PPS program, which helps us to be really accurate where we need to be. For the rest of the season, we use the NDVI imagery in Agworld to help us with scouting problem areas in our fields."

NDVI layers have been available in Agworld since mid-2018 and Ben has found them to be very useful on his farm. "We use Agworld daily, which makes it easy to have a quick look at the latest NDVI image whenever we want to. As soon

as we see some problem spots on the imagery in Agworld, we can go into the field and try to figure out what the problem is. The problem can be anything from goose damage, to mice, moles or slugs for example and we can now get this addressed without having to physically walk the entire field. This is where the Agworld NDVI imagery helps us a lot: it shows us the exact problem areas in our fields to look at. This process allows us to quickly fix exactly those areas that need it before the problem can spread to other areas, which saves us time and money.”

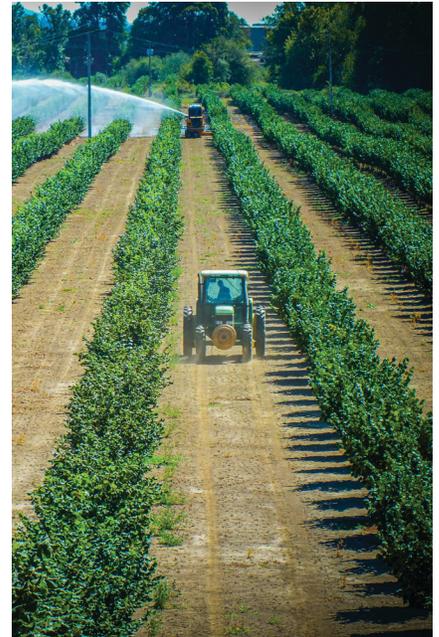
Input application tracking

VanDyke Farms is located in a valley surrounded by vineyards, which can cause friction when grapevines get damaged by phenoxy drift for example or when certain pesticides drift onto their vineyards. Although phenoxy herbicides can drift over 20 miles in the right conditions with inversion layers present, VanDyke Farms often gets instant blame as they are located in close proximity. Ben elaborates: “I know the damage that a phenoxy can do to sensitive crops like grape vines, and I fully understand the anger and frustration this causes with these farmers. The problem is however that I often end up getting blamed immediately, even though I am 100% certain it wasn’t us that drifted any herbicide.”

“We have always been conscious about keeping our sprays contained on our farm because we have neighbors with sensitive crops and now we have hazelnut trees and blueberry bushes ourselves as well, which are very sensitive too. However, knowing that it wasn’t us that caused herbicide drift does not equal having legal proof in case of an investigation, which is where Agworld plays a very important role for us. We are extremely strict now on recording every single detail from our input applications in Agworld, from the exact weather conditions to nozzle type, boom-height and all the other information that is available.”

Ben continues: “From time to time we do get investigated by the DOA when they receive a spray drift complaint. Back in the old days when we would just write our spray records down, this always made me very nervous – ‘what if I miss a piece of paper?’ or ‘what if someone forgot to write something down?’. We would solely rely on the handwritten recommendation from the agronomist combined with our handwritten records and the information from the spray controller – our operators would enter this data so it would be prone to errors. These worries are gone now that we utilize the Agworld platform. As soon as investigators see our records in Agworld and the details contained in it, they realize that we are very determined to do the right thing; this makes the whole process a lot quicker and easier.”

“An added benefit for us is that, by recording this data on a platform with standardized data like Agworld, we are able to create any kind of reports that we need for GAP and other certification. With grass seed production this wasn’t really a big item for us, but with blueberries and hazelnuts, this has become very important. Our buyers really like the Agworld reports – the speed with which I can create them and how easy they are to interpret for them makes a real difference here.”



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Ben VanDyke

VanDyke Farms, Yamhill, OR

**VAN DYKE
FARMS**

KEEPING GOOD THINGS GROWING

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A balanced workflow

VanDyke Farms has created a streamlined workflow through the Agworld platform that helps everyone involved in the inputs application process. Ben explains: “We now get our input recommendations from our Valley Ag agronomist through Agworld, which saves me having to spend time entering this data plus it eliminates the risk of erroneous data entry on my side. From the recommendation, I then create a work order for our applicators, which entails me making that recommendation into something that’s usable for my applicators.”

“I can build in the tank sizes and tank mixes etc. in Agworld, which is very easy for me to do. Having all this detailed information available in Agworld prevents errors during operation because it is so easy for our operators to get confused with fluid ounces, dry ounces and doing all the math. So now when I build the tank mixes in Agworld, they can use those as their baseline. This has really helped reduce the number of mistakes made, compared to the past.”

“To me, this is the most important benefit that Agworld offers us: Agworld helps eliminate unnecessary risks in the input application process. Whether it is the risk of getting fined by the DOA for something we didn’t do, the risk of misapplying chemical in one of our fields or the risk of misinterpreting an agronomist’s recommendation: Agworld helps us mitigate these risks. The same goes for the risk of missing a problem spot in a field that we wouldn’t find without regular NDVI Imagery; Agworld makes sure that we minimize these risks and the potential effects on our operation. In a sector like agriculture that is all about taking risks but also trying to keep them at a minimum, mitigation tools like Agworld are part of the future.”



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