



Mobile Solutions
Mobility Made Smarter

Vital Farms/DCT Solutions Case Study

DCT Brings Technology Edge to Vital Farms—Organic Agriculture Business Benefiting from Scout Mobility Suite

Customer: Vital Farms Headquarters: Austin, TX



*PASTURE-RAISED
IS ALL WE DO!*

Project Background

What we see in others is a reflection of ourselves, so it's been said, a fitting description for the relationship and cultural fit between DCT Mobile Solutions and one of its newest clients, Vital Farms.

Vital Farms, established in 2007 and based in Austin, Texas, has a core mission of bringing nutritious, ethically-produced food to consumer tables via family farms throughout the Midwest and Southeast. The company, specializing in pasture-raised eggs and grass-fed, pasture-raised butter, and more than 100 partner farms operate with well-defined organic practices, stressing the humane treatment of animals as a core principle, flying against the standards of large, corporate producers. Vital Farms has a national reach, serving chain grocery stores and restaurants “from California to Maine,” according to the company’s mission statement.

But Vital Farms had a dilemma at the end of 2016: Its auditing system was largely pencil and paper-based — record keeping from the playbook of the “1950s and 60s,” Vital Farms Vice President Jeff Hinds said. The burdensome system caused inefficiencies, slowed operations and increased costs. Vital Farms wanted to automate the process and spent an entire quarter vetting eight firms and suppliers before choosing Kansas City-based DCT Mobile Solutions. In DCT, Vital Farms found a like-minded company, or “partner” as Hinds said, dedicated to excellence.

“We walked them through what we could do and they said, ‘Man, that’s great,’” DCT Founder/President Shane Langston said. “We put a proposal together, and they came back and said, ‘You’re higher than anyone else.’”

“So I asked them to explain why their eggs cost more, why Vital Farms’ products are worth more than 99 cents at the grocery store. That resonated with them, that our products and the services behind them — exactly like theirs — exceed industry norms. Vital Farms recognized this was, in fact, what they needed and they stepped up and made the investment.”

The company’s new, DCT-designed system deployed in March 2017 and is in the first phase of a multi-phased integration. Hinds said the new system is a significant upgrade from the manual tracking method used previously, paying immediate dividends by streamlining operations. “We spent a long time finding out who could provide us with all the benefits, all the tech we’d need to have an effective and efficient system,” said Hinds, who oversees quality, food safety, research, development and grower support. “DCT was the only company I could check every box on. They weren’t the cheapest, but they provided everything we needed and sometimes you have to pay for value. That’s what Vital Farms did on this. “We knew there was a value with all the benefits, and there were even benefits we didn’t expect, like optimum routing, farm pinpoints, instant communication. ... We got so much more than what I ever expected from DCT out of this technology.”

The DCT Solution

DCT Mobile Solutions' signature product, **Scout Mobility Suite**, allows Vital Farms to better manage the independent farms under its banner — they span from Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Illinois in the Midwest to Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia in the South — and schedule on-site visits, and keep up-to-date, easily accessible records about each. The software also gives Vital Farms the ability to create checklists ensuring farms are compliant with FDA regulations to stay organic certified.

"What we did is put all of it into electronic form," DCT Vice President Valère Palhoriès said. "By automating everything on our end, we essentially centralized all the data and made it easy to search." The checklists, he said, are particularly relevant for Vital Farms and its agricultural producers.

"They basically have 104 points they need to verify with the farms and any answer other than compliant results in a corrective action checklist," Palhoriès said. "Based on the severity of the infraction, we determine a follow-up date with the farmer and who is responsible for the follow-up, whether it's the auditor or grower-support." "It was also very important for them to be able to capture pictures. If the farmer is non-compliant, then capturing a picture allows them to point out to the farmer what is specifically wrong, and more importantly, provides a paper trail."

Hinds said DCT personnel toured Vital's farm operations to better understand the company's auditing process so it could tailor systems to Vital Farms' needs. "They made sure they understood detail for detail what we needed," he said. "I don't know that I would have gotten that with some of my other suppliers. It would have been a telephone relationship, conference calls and webinars."

Equipment used in the Vital Farms deployment includes the 10.1-inch D10 rugged Android tablet from Xplore, Brother PocketJet 7 mobile printer, and MobiControl by Soti, which allows DCT to be the point of contact for training and tech support.

"With this technology, standards are more consistent," Hinds said. "Now it's not just something written on a piece of paper that may take weeks to get into our computer system. I can immediately get data and I have real-time access. I get better response time for corrective actions, and that helps the farmers be successful and it helps ensure to our consumers that we're upholding all of our standards."



Langston said DCT is excited about working with Vital Farms moving forward. "This has been a really enjoyable thing to help a company that is doing something that, collectively, we all agree with," he said. Hinds echoed those sentiments of partnering with DCT. "We got the right company" he said. "It's not always about who can do the cheapest job for you. You get what you pay for, and we've been tickled with DCT's commitment — it's exactly what you want from someone you're in business with."



About DCT Mobile Solutions

Whatever the challenge, chances are we can develop and deliver a smarter solution for your business. Since 1996, DCT Solutions Group has provided inventory management software, mobile computers and wireless networks for major corporations and companies across the globe. Call us today, or visit our website to learn more about DCT!