**Mike** [00:00:21] I'm delighted to be joined today by the team from JSR Farms, so I'd love to welcome onto the screen Tim Reimer, who is the chief executive for JSR Farms, and Stephen Waites is the managing director for the Parks and Genetics Division, and also Erhan Donmez, who is the group I.T. manager. So welcome, guys, and thanks for joining the session today. I'd just like to start with you, Tim. You know, tell us a little bit about JSR Farms and what you guys do.

**Tim** [00:00:51] Yes, we're an integrated mixed farming business based in East Yorkshire. We've been around for 60 years and we have a turnover of 30 million wood mixed in the sense that we grow crops and animals. We also sell added value breeding stock to other farmers all over the world.

**Mike** [00:01:12] That's great. And can you tell us a little bit more about what's going on within the business?

**Tim** [00:01:16] Yeah, like all businesses, we're gathering more and more data and we have found it more difficult to analyse that data in a user friendly manner. And about two years ago now, I was with a group of farmers and we were discussing the same problem. And somebody who was not a farmer as such is actually a tomato said, have you tried Qlik for analysing your data? And I wrote it down and came home. And about a week later, I think, Mike, you and I had a conversation.

**Mike** [00:01:54] Yeah. And I remember it well, Tim. And I guess at that time, can you sort of share with us some of the frustrations that you are having and what you were looking to change?

**Tim** [00:02:03] A lot of it was born out of frustration that traditionally data has been owned by finance. They are the purveyors of all information. And we have to go knock on their door and say, can we have some analysis? And I wanted to get the data into the operational side so that the operational people who know the questions to ask could actually do it themselves without being reliant on the data from the finance team and the finance team as a traditional way of reporting data, which isn't very user-friendly for it's accurate, it's timely, but not always user friendly and it's user friendly. And so if if the information that you're putting in front of nonfinancial managers is not user friendly, they glaze over very quickly indeed. And you've lost them and therefore you can't have the discussion. What I saw with Qlik was the ability of getting the data from the back room to the front room and get those operational guys out there who are close to the activities, who are making the decisions, saying, let's analyse this, what are we doing here? How can we make changes?

**Stephen** [00:03:25] One thing that's important and I think it's probably the same in a lot of companies. There's a lot of things, you know, in a company, but you just can't prove everyone's got that feeling that in our thing, in the global business, that field is worse than that field. If you asked any member of staff that tell you that. But there's no tangible way of proving it in the numbers because the numbers are so unwieldy. What Qlik's allowed us to do is put them together, compare them side by side, and you can look at it and go, yes, that is worse than that. And that is quite powerful, really. So you can make decisions on do we continue to at least that? Do you do we look at selling that land, things like that. So you've got other uses which Qlik then allow you to look into.

**Mike** [00:04:01] Yeah, and I think things have certainly changed from the days of when I was a young farmer, Stephen. And and I guess the key here is, is very looking at the detail and trying to understand, you know, how fate converts into yields. So just tell me a little bit more about what you've been doing with Qlik in that area.

**Tim** [00:04:18] You know, traditionally and everybody who is farming crops at the moment would chime with their seats. There's quite a lot of software out there for measuring the cost of seed sprays and fertilisers. And I think when they wrote the programme, they just forgot about reporting. And so it turns out all these columns of figures which which mean nothing to to anybody unless you're prepared to study them in a lot of detail. So, you know, we've got an app now that that does that. And it's providing a lot of good business insight into the crop part of the business.

**Mike** [00:05:01] And has that brought a shift in people's comfort zone around using information more effectively within within the business?

**Stephen** [00:05:10] I'd definitely say so, yes, because it makes what looks on the face of it, incredibly complex data, incredibly easy to use. And if it allows you to sort of ask a question. So if you say, OK. This has been great performance of the last month was great, but actually has it been our best month ever, that kind of answer that you can get, whereas in the past you'd have to go through a myriad of other spreadsheets which we've saved in monthly intervals and try and find the best month and say, do we compare against it? So for that, you can sort of answer a question within a meeting where normally that would have generated a minute in that meeting for somebody to go off and do and then work from that day onwards. It's been really valuable in that respect.

**Mike** [00:05:47] And I guess just bringing that back to them as that allowed you to to be a little bit more challenging or just to really, you know, get to understand the underlying issues within the business more effectively.

**Tim** [00:06:00] Yeah, it's all about turning all this data into knowledge and we can make decisions about it. So now our quarterly board meetings. Yes, we look at the traditional balance sheet and profit and loss and cash flow, but the managing directors like Steven will do their report through Qlik. And it makes so much more of an interactive meeting with the non-executive directors being able to ask questions and then, Stephen, be able to answer them there. And then without having to go back in and say, I'll get back to you in three days.

**Mike** [00:06:39] And Stephen, and just from your side of things. Does that excite you then the board meetings now that you can actually have the information at your fingertips as opposed to having reams of paper or however it used to be?

**Stephen** [00:06:52] It depends what subjects you're talking about. Sometimes it's not necessarily always positive, but to be able to get that answer almost in real time is really, really important, because like Tim said, in those environments where you're having a board meeting with non-executive directors, they're interested because they're in the moment. And to be able to answer the question in the moment is almost as valuable as the answer to the question, because then you can steer the conversation into somewhere more useful beyond that point as well. Whereas in the old way, you're quite fragmented because of essentially having to go back and interrogate a spreadsheet a couple of days later and everyone slept on it and they've got different views, so no it's quite important.

**Mike** [00:07:27] Yeah, that sounds very much like. Ans Erham. one for you. So in terms of the systems that were in the business and are currently in the business, you know, how many can you could you access easily prior to this? And where have you found that sort of data strategy moving?

**Erhan** [00:07:47] Well, one of the things that made it easy for us is that the Qlik has variable, been compatible with different different data sources. So what that means then we can pull all the information into Qlik and then manipulate it from there onwards. But one of the things that we found challenging is that when a piece of report has been requested, let's say from Farm and the database coordinator had to sort of spend maybe a few hours on it to be able to either help me to reconstruct and to reconcile with a piece of information or to be able to help with the reporting. And as Steve pointed out, is a question that came up in the board meeting. Sometimes if it's not a spreadsheet that they had to sort of refer to, it will be a piece of database that we have to dig out the information so they can answer back and feed it back to the board again.

**Mike** [00:08:41] So I guess that ability to drive that single version of the information has been really important. How has that changed the way that you're preparing information now Erhan

**Erhan** [00:08:56] The information is already there because it's live and we don't have to sort of do anything extra because it's already been done. So what that means that we can sort of use the time of writing to focus on more strategic areas rather than try and back up a piece of information that management trying to get hold of.

**Mike** [00:09:16] And Stephen, anything from you?

**Stephen** [00:09:18] I think one thing which is important to note, as well as the fact that it brings in all of the data you're looking at and it going forward and filtering, this is more like in a live situation. It also , Qlik shows you which what it isn't showing you, if that makes sense by highlighting the data, which is now exempt to what you're trying to look at. And sometimes it's quite useful because in the past, when you're navigating spreadsheets are just purely navigating databases, it's easy to exclude something which might actually be useful. And especially in the farming industry, people being technologically savvy doesn't necessarily go hand in hand. So if you are naming a farm, they may have the name right. But it's not got to capitalise letter or the staff. So if you're doing traditional searches on traditional databases, they are suddenly excluded. Whereas Qlik will actually show you, hang on a minute. There's something related to what you're searching with. Yes. It isn't exactly in your search parameters, but you probably keep it in there. And that's very, very powerful, especially in the farming arena.

**Mike** [00:10:14] That's great to hear. And I think the detail is quite apparent. And I guess, you know, in terms of using it in real time in board meetings, how have you also start to translate that into other areas of the business?

**Stephen** [00:10:25] We're also a sales company much like yourself, so we sell genetic products to other people. So when we're in that arena and generally in the pig industry, we talk about our income vs. alone. So we send a load of pigs away. So everyone talks about loans, whereas we can display data, which is all of our animals. So most people talk about animals in groups of 200. We can talk about them currently in 600 thousands. So it's a big step change in the fact that that data is there for you. Instantly, you can sort of answer any of your customer questions pretty much right on the number, but with exactly what they asked. And that's quite a powerful bit in the past. When you have the sales team going out, they would have a table of information. But if the customers question not quiet on that, then it's no use to you. But then if they say, right, what was your performance over this particularly hot period of weather? Well, when was that? And they give you the dates? Well, that was our performance. So you can see we weren't really affected. It's a very powerful tool. Is hard to understand what value it gives you. But I think your customer then is a bit more comfortable in you because they realise that this data is true data. You aren't just making it up, it's just giving them sound window into your business. So I think on the sale side, it also helps us.

**Mike** [00:11:38] And is that. The same in terms of the supply community as well, or is it is it more on the customer side?

**Stephen** [00:11:46] Well, we have used this with the supplier community just to show trends, which they probably should know about us, but don't. But we can go back to them and say, hang on a minute. This is what our relationship looks like in numbers, which is actually quite powerful, whether it's come into negotiations or even just tweaking efficiencies in your relationship going forward.

**Mike** [00:12:07] Yeah, that is very powerful. And and have you also started to use that with the customers that you're speaking to?

**Tim** [00:12:13] Yeah. So we've we have a bull semen centre up in the north of England and they're providing semen to our customers all over the country, in fact, internationally as well. And we have an app that allows the manager there to analyse a lot of data that she wasn't able to analyse before

**Stephen** [00:12:37] Before a lot of the data relating to the semen business was centralised in the office. But the sites are quite remote. So now the process manager that I can see such things as live orders come in in order trends in the past. It also allows us to probably give a better service to our customer. So such things we get highlighted. Now, if a customer has missed an order, which does happen, sometimes we can forget some of these mind slips so she can get a live update about we can actually proactively contact the customer to say, actually, your orders come in or not come in. Does it need to be changed? Does it need to be looked at in a different way? So it allows us to actually have probably more data access at the coalface where the systems need to be made in quite quick time to be able to do that.

**Mike** [00:13:18] And from your side of things, Stephen. I mean, how how how was it to pick up Qlik? How did you find sort of that learning curve?

**Stephen** [00:13:27] Reasonably easy to get, like a good enough grasp to make an app which is useful. so I can use Excel reasonably well. So essentially all of my Excel knowledge kind of fell into quite well. The database side has been something which you've had to learn. But the fact that you can sort of start off by feeding it an Excel spreadsheet which already exists and then build it up from that kind of gets you to learn your way around it. And also with Qlik having such a big online presence is very rarely a problem, which isn't a Google search away from somebody else have already kind of done the same problem as you so you can copy and paste it into your script. And then that little checker at the bottom will says it's OK, generally makes you feel OK with the world again.

**Mike** [00:14:05] No, the community is great for that. It really helps you to find the right answers. But I guess as well, how important is it to have the right partner working alongside you?

**Stephen** [00:14:14] I think really when you're looking at Qlik on a business sense, the biggest thing, the biggest hurdle you've got to start with in the whole project isn't actually making apps or thinking where your data comes from. It's getting that initial step of somebody essentially putting some of your data together into a Qlik app for you to show you how well it works. And I remember the first time Catalyst came to us, we basically gave them behere behemoth of all of our big data and said, please make this something interesting. And what they came with was even better than we thought we could have got if that made sense. And that shows you then how this thing is actually quite a powerful tool. And PowerBI gave us the like. I don't know. The need and want within ourselves to actually try and put a lot of effort into this, because I think a lot of it is the starting of it, the relationship is the hardest bit making the decision right, we're going to use Qlik but then that doesn't tell you how are you going to use Qlik. And that's where the value of like an intermediary like Catalyst has come in because they've really shown us a what we can do with it being there to help us to do it in the first instance and then been there to support the things we've done ourselves. So it's not just them saying, yes, you can make an out, but we prefer to send you all the support. We'll do them all for you. They've kind of given us the ability to walk by ourselves using this software, and that's probably very vital to us

**Tim** [00:15:28] The support that we've had from from you and in particular from from one of your colleagues. Ben, in any industry, there's a lot of jargon, a lot of acronyms. And I've been really impressed at how Ben has been able to understand the acronyms and the jargon very quickly and actually start using it as we talk and design apps and things that are, you know, that's been really important because very often you may have somebody who comes in who doesn't really understand what you're talking about and he does. And therefore, we get to the heart of the matter very quickly.

**Mike** [00:16:07] Yeah, I think it's really valuable when when you work with consultants or where you work in partnership, the the team around the table have a really vested interest in what what what you are doing as customers. And also what we are doing is kind of thought leaders in that space and that in that way you can you can, you know, aspire to continue to to push the boundaries a bit. And I guess, you know, on on on that note, I mean, are you able to put your finger on some percentage benefits, you know, benchmark increases, performance changes, things that have said, you know, things that you are happy to share with us around other yields or various different statistics that that have that start to impact the business as a result of saying all of this intelligence and knowledge.

**Tim** [00:16:59] You know, for any CEO, if you've got some dirt in the business, you want to be on the top of the well, not underneath. And claque allows us to get that data at the top of the table for us or to discuss. So there's a big cultural change. People are much more confident because we've got the data analysed at our fingertips. And I think on the livestock side, we've got better efficiency, but not at the expense of welfare. We're better farmers as a result because we're now been able to get the attention to detail the traditionally small farmers had.

**Mike** [00:17:37] OK, I guess probably coming onto the home stretch a little bit here then. So so question for you then, Tim, in terms of, you know, thinking about the future use of the solution and things that you might want to do with it, what's what's next on the horizon?

**Tim** [00:17:55] What it will allow us to do because we've got the data is being able to choose not just individual fields, but areas of fields which are less productive. And we can put into something more suitable, like environmental crops, nectar mixes for bees and honeybees and things like that. So we we can actually target the areas that are very productive for growing crops and those areas that are less productive we will put to environmental crops.

**Mike** [00:18:28] Now, that's that's really, really impressive. And Stephen, from your side of the business as well, was the kind of next next steps in the future looking at so recently, the latest buildings we've put forward.

**Stephen** [00:18:40] We've got cooling systems in there. So we've always been pretty good at keeping animals warm in winter. But nobody's ever thought that UK gets warm enough to justify cooling them in summer. But we can use this now. So the cooling system outputs data so we can directly compare external temperature to internal temperature and see how reactive the building is, because like with this business, that the wealth of animals is first and foremost, because if you got welfare right, you generally get performance right to go hand in hand for the business. So you've been able to look at things like this and actually probably in the future build logically caps, which pull off many different databases, just focussed on like headline subjects such as welfare. We could essentially have a welfare KPI up which looks across the business. So there's always more development to be done here. So once you've got the understanding of where the key data comes from and how to start it, we can then view and make it larger.

**Mike** [00:19:32] And Erhan, I'm going to ask you the same question just around the sort of future use and obviously understanding what's capable with within the solution. And then I'll bring it back to Tim for a bit of a wrap up type type question. So Erhan. in terms of the future and your. Your use cases that you see within the organisation, how are you going to support the business going forward?

**Erhan** [00:19:57] The main thing is any other new system coming in now claiming the driver's side. If I say, OK, is it going to be compatible with Qlik or can we have this extra API or extra? Linked to the database so we can use it to report on this new infrastructure that we are implementing basically

**Mike** [00:20:19] Fantastic and Tim, predictive capability and sort of thinking about what what happens with the weather. And I know that you it often tell me that when I come in and see you, it's been the wettest two hours of last Saturday that that's ever been in the previous three years, which I always find brilliant as I can remember playing rugby in it a lot, but but you're really on top of that. And that's really exciting for anybody, I guess, that comes into your business. How do you feel your leadership style has changed as a result of of getting hold of this information?

**Tim** [00:20:58] Probably the best way to answer that would be that if you took Qlik away from us and said it's no more, we would have a problem in various parts of the business in being able to make quick decisions because it's become so integral to how we operate. So, you know, it's part and parcel of the way we work now. It's it's there was once we never had forklifts. We used to carry everything on our backs in farming. And now we have forklifts. And people often say, how do we ever manage without forklifts? Well, I think we all had bad back instead. But I feel the same about Qlik. How did we ever manage without Qlik.

**Mike** [00:21:46] Well, Tim, I think that says it all. I've I've never had Qlik likened to managing without forklifts in the past. But I think it just conjures up the the the amount of work that you've put into useing the solution within the business and the impact that it's had on your organisation. So I think without saying any much more, that's just a great way to end the session today. So I'd like to thank Tim Stephen and Erhan for their contribution and wish you all the success in the future, guys. And thank you very much for joining this session today.