

CASE STUDY Iowa Select Farms



Iowa Select Farms (ISF) is the largest pork producer in Iowa and the 8th largest in the U.S. Founded and privately-owned by Iowa Falls natives, the company has 165,000 sows and annually produces nearly one billion pounds of pork. With nearly 700 swine farms across the state, Iowa Select Farms employs more than 1,000 people and contracts with over 345 farmers, all while supporting hundreds of local businesses throughout Iowa.

THE SITUATION

While ISF was using SQL Server 2012 Standard Edition, they had around 123 different databases and about 50 SQL scheduled jobs belonging to various categories, running at different schedules from the SQL instance. No SQL Server alerts were configured. ISF uses numerous applications, which at the time used various databases from the single SQL instance. Many users would access the database through applications. ISF's current system didn't have a fail-safe mechanism, which meant that if it went down they would have downtime that would affect their business operations.

ISF's data wasn't easily accessible, and it wasn't being backed-up properly.

OBJECTIVES

Data migration ensures business continuity and future growth by making IT infrastructure more resilient. ISF realized that as they expanded their business, their databases needed to be scaled to their growth. They needed to migrate their current database environment to the latest SQL Server Version 2016, and enable SQL clustering to ensure there would be no downtime that would impact their operations.

Without disrupting their day-to-day business activities, the migration would need to include ISF's:

- **Databases**
- **Reporting Services**
- **Integration Services**
- **Team Foundation Services**
- **IMB Cognos**
- **Backup Process**
- **Mailing Services**

ISF's overall objective was to increase reliability, performance, availability and scalability to ensure robust growth.

"Working with the LaunchIT team on our project was a great experience and helped to ensure a successful implementation."

- Carl Vogel
Director of IT, Iowa Select Farms

LAUNCHIT'S SOLUTION

LaunchIT proposed a migration process that would span six weeks, including the production cutover plan. Within the six weeks, the following acts were completed:

- **System assessment study**
- **Document inventory**
- **Capacity planning**
- **Server installation**
- **Failover configuration**
- **Dry run of SQL Instance migration**
- **Scripts to migrate TFS**
- **IBM Cognos, Reporting Services, Integration Services**
- **Production cutover**

The LaunchIT team consisted of one project coordinator and two development resources. All of the work was accomplished offsite, except for the onsite production cutover.

THE RESULTS

The production cutover was successfully accomplished in five hours, with all requirements and database objects migrated. ISF can anticipate healthy, secure data growth.

TECHNOLOGY STACK

MS SQL Server 2016 in Fail over cluster mode
Windows Cluster
Team Foundation Services
IBM Cognos 11

LaunchIT met all of the specific challenges of Iowa Select Farms. These challenges included:

Multiple outdated databases and processes.

Of these, some were either not currently being used or ISF was unaware of their use. LaunchIT worked with ISF to discover these databases and processes and then determine which were useful and which were redundant or defunct. Throughout the project, LaunchIT guided ISF and suggested optimum ways of performing certain operations.

Lack of user acceptance testing and development environment.

Because ISF didn't have an environment to test their application, LaunchIT worked closely with their staff to provide updates on when databases were migrated. This way, ISF could direct their working applications to the newly migrated database to uncover any issues.

Microsoft discontinuing Reporting Services in the 2016 Standard Edition.

Upgrading to the Enterprise Edition for just the Reporting Services license would be much costlier. With LaunchIT's expertise money was saved and risk mitigated by configuring Reporting Services in a separate instance to work with the SQL Cluster.

Enterprise Edition 2 Pack of Core Licenses costs \$14,256
Standard Edition 2 Pack of Core Licenses costs \$3,717
Savings of \$10,539

3
RESOURCES

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6
WEEKS