

“The good thing about Accredo is that everything connects. We have the system tuned to provide exactly the information we need.”

Clarinda McKeachie,
FarmChief,
Administration
Manager



Farm equipment provider keeps business humming with well-tuned Accredo system

Accessing up-to-date information about running costs is a winning formula for longstanding New Zealand farm equipment supplier, FarmChief. The company runs three branches in the South Island and one in the North Island. It relies on the Accredo accounting system to ensure tight control over sales activity and in-depth visibility into how each location performs.

Founded in the 1940s as Murray Implements, the company established several different businesses over the years, all involved in the sale and servicing of farm equipment. In 2014, it decided to merge its various entities under the one name, FarmChief.

FarmChief Administration Manager, Clarinda McKeachie, says “for the last 15 years, we have been on the same Accredo platform. The system has become bigger and better in the same way we have and has accommodated the changes we have experienced.

“The fact we could operate two or three businesses within the same accounting system was one of the things that attracted us to Accredo in the first place. Now that we have merged as one entity, we use Accredo Saturn to provide us with the business management capabilities we need at each

of our branches in Rolleston, Gore, Invercargill and Palmerston North.”

FarmChief today retails local and imported farm machinery. It specialises in implements such as bale feeders, grain augers, and slurry tankers – “basically any piece of high-spec equipment a farmer needs to get the job done on the land, we can provide”, says McKeachie.

The power of two

As administration manager, McKeachie says 90 per cent of her daily duties involve using Accredo. “I’m in the system all day, as are most of my administration team. But everyone – from sales managers through to the guys in the workshop – uses it. You can control who has access to information very easily. It is the nerve centre of our business operations.”

McKeachie says FarmChief uses all the functionality Accredo offers, but it is the job costing and inventory control modules that make her life easier. The two modules are tightly integrated, providing administration staff with everything they need to see about the pre-delivery work done on the machinery FarmChief sells.

“Before we deliver sold items, we have to prepare them, which often involves adding parts and

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undertaking service tasks. Job costing captures those costs, together with the labour, and holds them against the item in inventory. When I log into the system in the morning, I can see where all the work-in-progress is sitting and exactly how much each unit of stock owes us."

Pre-configuring the machinery to suit each buyer is a significant part of FarmChief's operation, McKeachie says. "When you are preparing to ship out a \$100k slurry tanker, you need to know what extra costs are attached to the item because they can be significant."

The tight integration between the two modules means FarmChief doesn't end up in a situation where it has money unaccounted for because someone forgot to add the item's labour charges.

"The fact that the information flows between the two modules automatically cuts down any room for error."



"We use Accredo as a default CRM system to qualify prospects and track sales and service information."

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Mobile integration

In a new move to further automate core business processes, FarmChief is in the process of implementing Tradie on the Move, software that will allow its workshop staff to add costs and enter time on mobile devices – information that then flows through directly to Accredo.

"It also allows them to do purchase orders linked to the job they are working on and send requests through for parts," says McKeachie.

FarmChief's Accredo QSP (Qualified Support Person) is Andrew Joll from Anacrusis Limited. He is implementing Tradie on the Move at its Invercargill branch. "Once that is operating smoothly, we will roll it out everywhere else," says McKeachie. "It takes away the human error element of forgetting to add the time into the system manually."

Being able to see up-to-date information at a glance is very helpful, says McKeachie. "It allows us to have our own set of internal accounting reports,

which I complete in the first or second week of the following month. It gives us a true picture of how the business is going – rather than relying on quarterly reports from the accountant."

Support always on hand

FarmChief runs Accredo in the Cloud off infrastructure provided by Anacrusis, and McKeachie says having Andrew on the ground to help with the system is very valuable. "He is very reactive. We ask him to do something, and he is on it. Our business continues to change, and Andrew makes the Accredo system accommodate our expanding needs."

FarmChief uses most of the modules in the Accredo software suite with a focus on automating repetitive duties to enable staff to concentrate on higher-value tasks.

"I am a big fan of Accounts Receivable," says McKeachie. "We use it to follow up overdue payments and email invoices directly from the system. It makes chasing payments a lot easier. We also use the reminder memos and alarms that Accredo offers. Proactively following people up gets cash in quicker and cuts down on the amount of follow-up we have to do down the track."

Custom tools for deeper insights

FarmChief also uses Accredo's customisation tools – table designer and report designer – to record valuable information about its customers.

"We use Accredo as a default CRM system to qualify prospects and track sales and service information. The sales team can look at reports that capture information from the relevant Accredo modules and get a good picture of cross-selling or upselling opportunities."

A custom script created for FarmChief provides a real-time list of its 'live' stock showing everything allocated and stock that is arriving shortly.

"That type of information is invaluable to the sales guys," says McKeachie. "They can get a good picture of availability at a glance."

Joll has also designed a table that captures stock units that have lending against them.

"I can load lending against specific stock items and monitor when they need paying or when there are curtailments due on them. I can search their locations to provide reports to the finance lenders. It is a tool I use daily for monitoring financed stock, and it saves me hours."

Says McKeachie: "The good thing about Accredo is that it seems like the possibilities are endless. Everything connects, and we have the system running extremely smoothly, tuned to provide exactly the information we need."