

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



About OMAFRA Research and Innovation Branch (OMAFRA RIB)

OMAFRA's RIB provides funding for research and innovation initiatives that promote economic development to strengthen Ontario's agri-food sectors. RIB manages research programs and facilities, supports student talent development and mobilizes knowledge to accelerate innovation. They also collaborate with innovation partners to commercialize knowledge from demand-driven research or apply new insights to

improve policies and programs. RIB's clients and partners include agriculture and food businesses, research and innovation organizations (e.g., the University of Guelph, Agri-Tech Commercialization Centre, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre), and provincial and federal government agencies across Canada.

The Challenge

The OMAFRA team was manually administering their research grants and their process needed to be better organized and maintained. Although there was a formal system for making funding decisions, there was too much manual work and paper involved. The application process needed to be better documented, controlled and managed. "What we lacked was a disciplined process," says Dr. Oswald (OZ) Zachariah, Manager of Innovation and Knowledge Management. "We needed a solid structure that outlined everything, from what we actually wanted and needed from applicants, to a formalized approval process, so everyone knew exactly what was expected of them."

OMAFRA's tracking and knowledge-gathering methods also needed some attention. "We had very little in place that tracked the actual efforts of our team. There was inadequate access to information on other funding sources, and limited documentation on how our infrastructure was being used at a project level. We needed to do better at gathering, reporting on, and transferring what knowledge we had," continues OZ, "as this is an important aspect of the Innovation Knowledge Management Unit's work for the Ministry."

Selecting SmartSimple

"Our first impression was that the SmartSimple team had an advanced understanding of our business, our challenges and the climate we were operating in," says OZ. "Their technical team spoke to us in clear terms we could understand, so we were able to have meaningful conversations. Once we saw a demonstration of what RMS360° could do, we were convinced this was the tool we'd been dreaming of."

Working with SmartSimple

SmartSimple's team-based, client-centric approach was a great benefit for OMAFRA. Not only did they appreciate having regular access to SmartSimple's senior management team, but they found that having a dedicated Account Manager was a valuable asset during the implementation process.

OMAFRA also maintains a very unique relationship with the University of Guelph that added an extra layer of administration to their system. "We needed the ability to share knowledge while still maintaining OMAFRA's accountability as the 'owner' of the RMS360° system," continues OZ. "SmartSimple gave us the ability to iron out the details and maintain a strong, collaborative relationship with the university."

"The time needed to manage research issues, performance measures and compile information has been greatly reduced. Our applicants and other community users have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, and they're excited to see the system grow. With so many fantastic features and the ability to have a dedicated server, we're already looking to the future of our RMS360° system," concludes OZ. "I'd recommend RMS360° to anyone; SmartSimple is a part of my ministry's research success and my own professional achievement story."

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Thanks to RMS360° OMAFRA and the University of Guelph are now jointly able to manage their respective mandates and resources from one, central system.

About SmartSimple

SmartSimple is endlessly configurable, putting the control of your system in your hands. Our cloud-based solution means you can communicate and integrate seamlessly with your community and the world. SmartSimple works hand in hand with your team to build your system. We're at your side from the first demonstration through implementation, training and beyond.

We've worked hard to gain the trust of tens of thousands of users around the world; contact us to learn how we'll earn your trust, too.

To learn more, visit www.smartsimple.com and request a demo, email us at sales@smartsimple.com, or call us, toll-free, at 1-866-239-0991.