



CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW

Country/Region:

Maxville, Ontario, Canada

Industry:

Grain Merchandising and Feed Mill

Customer Profile:

MacEwen Agricentre, Inc., is a large, multifaceted farm supply enterprise that provides farmers with dairy and poultry feed, custom crop inputs, and grain storage and marketing services.

Problem:

Selling grain at higher-than-market prices to maximize profits for clients who use MacEwen's grain marketing services.

Solution:

Grain Merchant Martin Charlebois leverages FarmLead to advertise to a wide US and Canadian market and find buyers who will meet his clients' target prices.

Benefits:

- Gives instant exposure to potential buyers across the US and Canada
- Increases chances of finding buyers who will pay target prices
- Helps price and sell local commodities that are not traded on exchanges

MacEwen Agricentre

Grain Merchant Leverages FarmLead to Meet Clients' Target Prices.

MacEwen Agricentre, Inc.

MacEwen Agricentre, Inc., is a large, multifaceted farm supply enterprise located in Maxville, Ontario—about halfway between Ottawa and Montreal. It was originally established as a feed mill in 1929 by William A. MacEwen and then passed on to his son, who sold it in 1975. In 1983, Jim MacEwen, current President and grandson of William A., purchased and re-opened it. Since that time, it has evolved into a substantial operation that provides farmers in eastern Ontario with dairy and poultry feed, custom crop inputs, and grain storage and marketing services.

Martin Charlebois, Grain Merchant

Martin Charlebois is a Grain Merchant at MacEwen Agricentre. As a grain trader, Martin wears two hats: he buys grain for the feed mill side of the operation, and he sells grain on behalf of farmers who use MacEwen's grain marketing services.

Martin has many years of relevant experience that make him perfect for this job. He has worked in agriculture since his college days. He started out as a part-time worker at a feed mill, eventually working his way up to managing the entire operation. He has also worked as a trader of both agriculture and non-ag commodities. He has been a grain merchandiser for over ten years.

Much of his typical workday is spent watching the markets. When the market is low, he buys grain for the feed mill. When it's high, he sells grain on behalf of his farmer clients. In his market, tonnes are the common unit for grain marketing. However, FarmLead can handle many different units making it easier for Martin to manage deals outside his usual markets.

Martin deals in frequent and large-volume trades, and they usually happen fast. It's a live environment, and markets can change by the hour or even by the minute. Most of his deals are done using the phone and email. "When the market is there," this works, and the deals are done very quickly.

The Challenge: Meeting Client Targets

When he's wearing his selling hat, Martin's job is to make money for his farmer clients. Sometimes, though, market prices might be below what his clients need. He has to find a way to maximize their profits by getting a higher price.

The FarmLead Solution

That's when Martin turns to FarmLead. He posts his offerings at the target price and immediately accesses a broad pool of potential buyers from all over Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, and he can wait a bit until he finds the right buyer, someone who is willing to pay the target price.

"I use the platform when the market is not there yet," Martin says. "I take a chance and post the ask, saying, 'I need a certain price for 1000 tonnes,' and if someone offers to buy, I can call my farmers and say, OK, we have a buyer at that price."

Martin also uses FarmLead for commodities that are not traded—local commodities such as barley and oats. "We can post products we don't often sell because we don't have a reference price on them. If we advertise to buy or sell in FarmLead at least we know where we stand and can make a purchase or sale. It's different for corn and soybeans and wheat."

Martin says he finds the layout of the FarmLead Marketplace very convenient. "On one page I can see what's for sale, the grade, the tonnage, the asking price, the freight...all the information is there."

The FarmLead Experience

Martin has been aware FarmLead since its release but says the fact that the service has been fine-tuned over the past few years to include many new features and functionalities has made it much more useful in his job. "It's an easy-to-use platform—I'm happy with how it has evolved."

"It's clear that the value [of FarmLead] is we can post anything, and then is immediately available to the public. It's valuable when we can trade grain that's not really on the market."

He likes the email Alerts FarmLead sends, containing a detailed table showing the relevant offers of grain for sale or purchase, the price, etc. "That's really handy. I can quickly scan it, and if it's relevant to me, I'll take a look. I love the look of it. It even has pictures of the grain."

Martin tells colleagues that FarmLead is the "eBay of grain." "It's a great tool!" he says. "I would tell people thinking about trying FarmLead that you don't have to pay until you make money. It costs nothing till you have a contract, and then you are happy and don't mind paying a small fraction."

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