

Innovating legacy systems after M&A to disrupt markets

To streamline herd genetic management, URUS wanted to bring together complex cattle data into one easy-to-use platform. Together we built a data-integrated solution that would modernize the decision-making process for dairy managers everywhere.

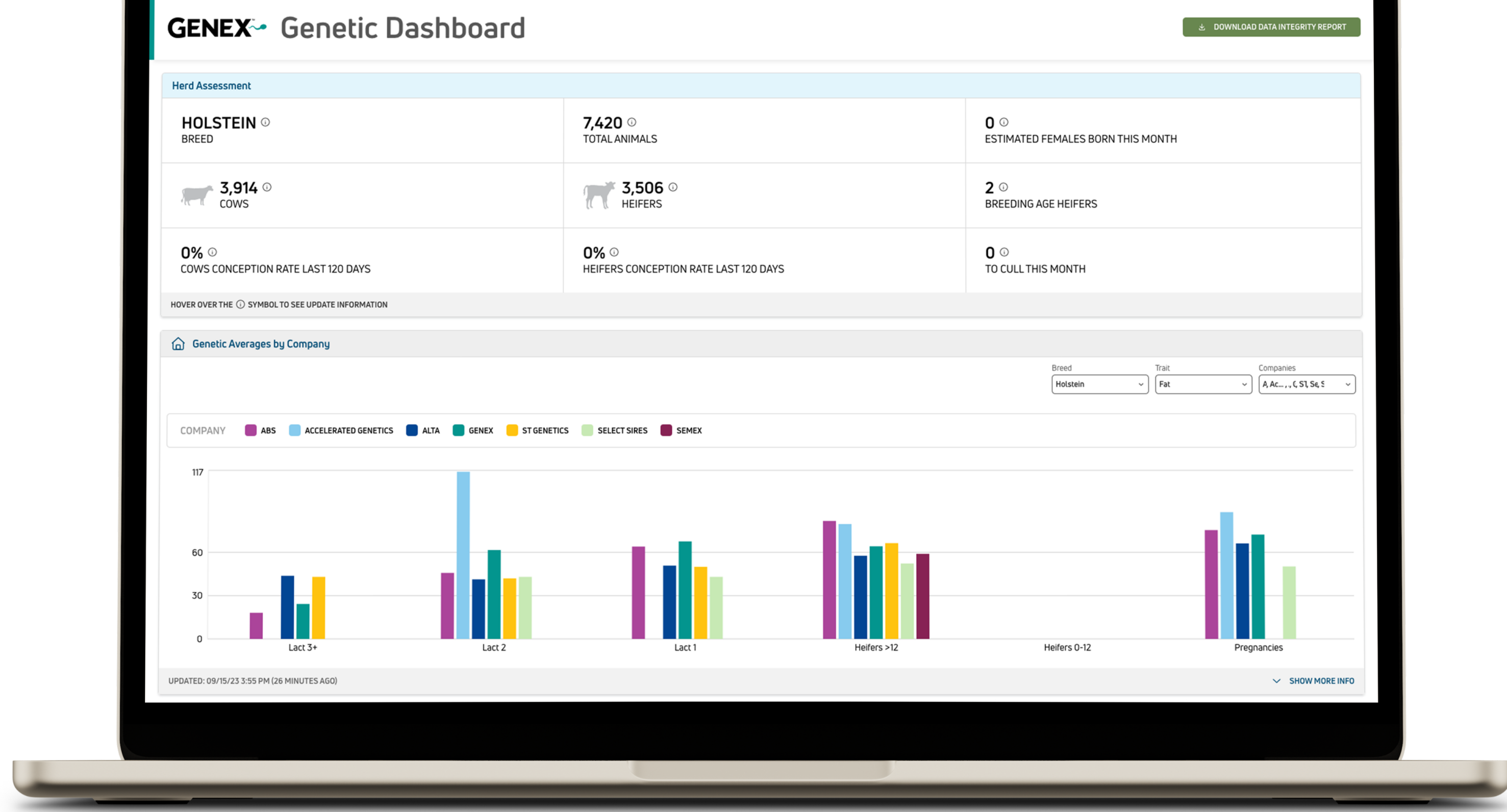
Vision

To make better decisions, Dairy managers have to analyze tons of data to perfect the profile of their herds. Particularly for the reproduction of their cows, they must carefully evaluate genetic mates with a consultant to find the best matches.

As a global leader in dairy and beef cattle production, URUS owns two of the biggest genetic consultant companies worldwide. Both needed to update their legacy systems so that their dairy consultants could get quick access to complex data and streamline the genetic decision-making process with dairy managers.

They wanted a solution that could speed up the dairy consultants work with integrated data sources and enrich it with the ability to visualize data and get better insights, while simultaneously integrating Dairy Comp – that is, VAS' product – to take advantage of all the data available related to the cow's productivity.

We helped URUS create a cutting-edge system after VAS, Genex, and Alta's M&A processes were completed so they could keep their global position and the market expertise of their dairy consultants.



Our Approach

To begin with, the Making Sense team needed to understand the unique user needs of artificial insemination consultants. We worked closely with these experts in order to understand what the legacy system helped them do – and how our solution could do it better.

In the past, these artificial insemination consultants had to manually pull vast amounts of data before analyzing it. Their most pressing need was to automatically access all this complex data in one place – from any ranch they were working from.

Through its partners (VAS, Genex, and Alta Genetics), URUS had a lot of data to mine and take advantage of. Our technology needed to connect the dots between these data sources. This was the heart of our project's approach.



Essential Features

To help dairy consultants leverage their expertise and find the best genetic matches, we created a platform with these key features:

Real-time data integration

No more manual data importing/exporting. Instead, dairy consultants could access real-time data from multiple sources, directly from the platform.

User-focused analysis tools

We transformed what was once "doable but difficult" on the legacy system into user-friendly tools on the new platform. Dairy consultants could now take advantage of insights, reports, visuals and dashboards, too.

Cloud-connected to use anywhere

The cloud-based platform allowed for anywhere-access, so that dairy managers and consultants could conveniently check herd management from any ranch or office location.

These three features were the pillars for our data-driven herd management tool, though the dairy consultants had plenty more ideas down the road.

Challenges Along the Way

The URUS project was challenging and required our technical teams to be more in sync than ever. Some of the sticking points that we had to work through included:

Ingrained habits from the legacy system

The legacy system was quite outdated and needed to reach a major level of efficiency, but artificial insemination consultants had gotten used to it. Because of their ingrained habits, it was challenging to encourage new or simpler ways of utilizing the data. At the same time, we had to make sure the logic of the features made sense to them.

Complex technical and design needs

The technical side of this project was extremely demanding. Our lead developer presented industry-leading architecture solutions that would help manage these large databases. In addition, we needed a design that was comforting and effective for consultants. After all, building a genetic plan is hard enough!

Difficult subject matter

Genetic management isn't exactly dinner table talk. We had to listen carefully to the dairy managers and the artificial insemination consultants to understand their working methods and how the integration platform system could best support them. (One of our team members even took an online course ("Genetic Models for Animal Breeding") to better understand cattle breeding.

Unwieldy amounts of data

Integrating huge amounts of data in real-time was a challenge. Because data sources came from different partners – including cattle genetic material companies Alta and Genex – it was difficult to get the algorithm to correctly process and place all the data.

Multiple expert user types

At the end of the day, our final users were expert dairy managers and consultants. We had to make sure that their complex needs were met on the platform and that the data results were correctly validated – without being experts ourselves!

Managing multiple stakeholders

Since the URUS platform made use of data from partners, it was challenging to balance all the stakeholders' wishes.

Prioritizing new updates

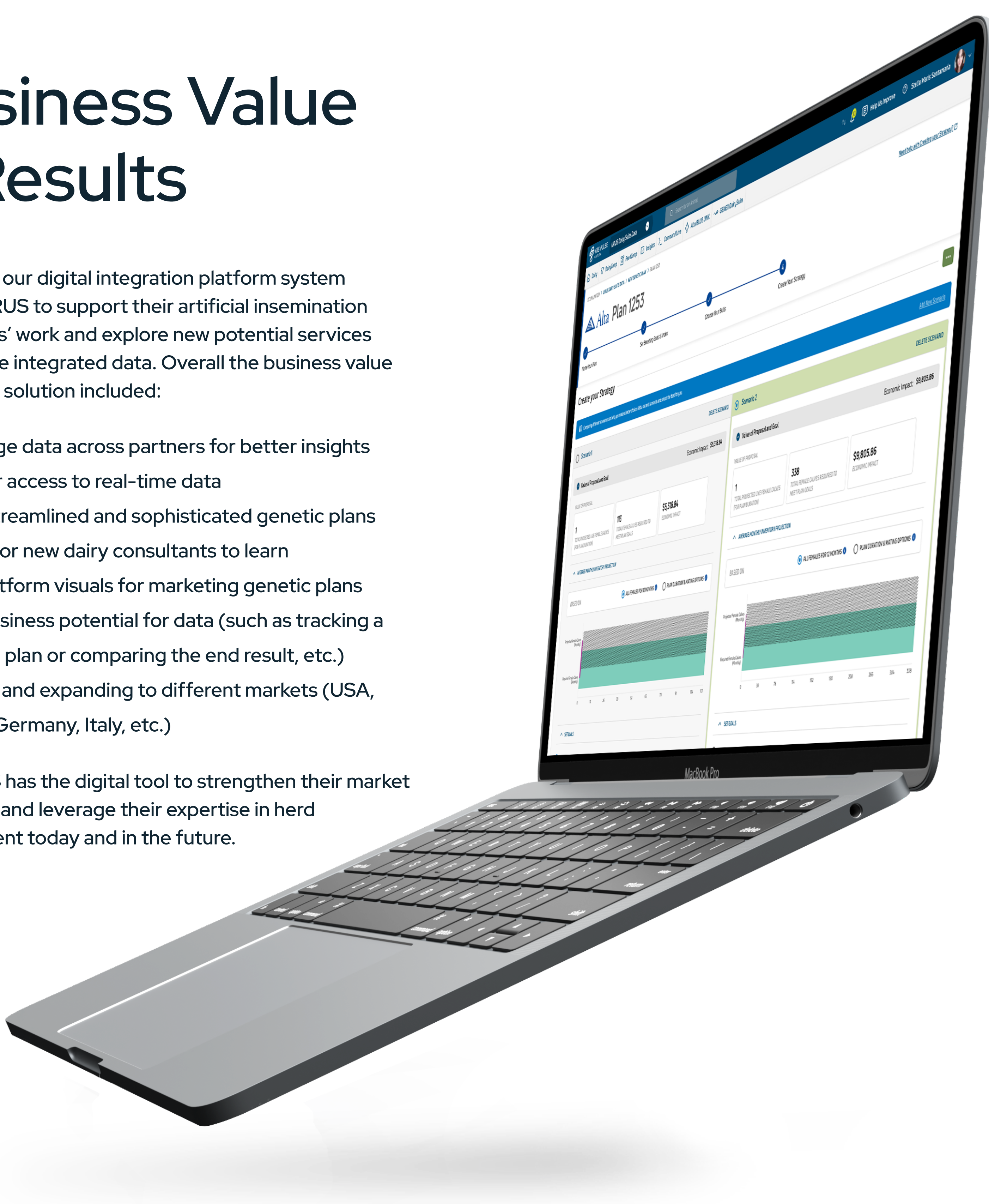
There's still so much that the system can do for genetic management and improvement. Objectively prioritizing all the new ideas for features is no easy feat.

Business Value & Results

Ultimately, our digital integration platform system allowed URUS to support their artificial insemination consultants' work and explore new potential services through the integrated data. Overall the business value of this new solution included:

- Leverage access across partners for better insights
- Quicker access to real-time data
- More streamlined and sophisticated genetic plans
- Easier for new dairy consultants to learn
- Use platform visuals for marketing genetic plans
- New business potential for data (such as tracking a genetic plan or comparing the end result, etc.)
- Scaling and expanding to different markets (USA, China, Germany, Italy, etc.)

Now URUS has the digital tool to strengthen their market leadership and leverage their expertise in herd management today and in the future.



Our Tech Stack Decision

