

CASE STUDY: USDA

The United States Department of Agriculture's [Risk Management Agency](#) (RMA) operates and manages the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC). RMA was created in 1996; FCIC was founded in 1938. RMA, through FCIC, provides crop insurance to American farmers and ranchers. Private-sector insurance companies sell and service the policies. RMA develops and/or approves the premium rate, administers premium and expense subsidies, approves and supports products, and reinsures the companies. RMA also sponsors educational and outreach programs and seminars on the general topic of risk management.

CHALLENGE

Chad Sheridan, CIO of RMA, and his team embarked on a mission to accelerate RMA IT's ability to deliver innovative business functionality in the form of modern applications. Sheridan's team faced primary challenges on two fronts: effective requirements-gathering and timely input from the business, and a slow development methodology within IT. Sheridan mandated a move to embrace Agile as both a development methodology and a mindset in capturing, developing, and delivering transformational enterprise applications. He and his team then set out to find a platform to help them realize that vision for agility and speed.

The heart of RMA's operations are in its Escrow processes. One of the primary benefits of Federal crop insurance is the ability for a producer to receive a timely payment following a claim. To support this the private insurance companies that sell and service policies establish an escrow account. After final adjustment of a claim, a company will submit this claim to FCIC for acceptance. The company must provide a check to the producer within three days of submission. FCIC funds the company's escrow account within three days of accepting the company submission. Annual indemnity payments have averaged roughly \$13 billion over the last three years, with peak payment periods of more than \$500 million per week. The legacy system RMA used to support the Escrow process needed to be modernized for greater flexibility, visibility, ease of use, and extension into a mobile and social world.

"We knew we had to embrace agility," said Sheridan. "Things were going to change in the business, so we needed a platform to deliver solutions that would easily adapt to changing conditions and regulations."

APPROACH

RMA sought a BPM-based application development platform to help the agency better-define its business processes and business requirements while accelerating delivery. The agency had an excellent team of software developers, but needed a modern way to address the limitations of rigid hard-coding in order to allow the business to become more agile and transformative. Sheridan and his team selected Appian Cloud as their application development platform due to its comprehensive feature set, ease of use, and scalability. Appian combines business process, mobility, social collaboration, business rules, content management and more in one integrated platform. Appian in the cloud delivers fast time-to-value while reducing cost and risk. Appian's visual drag-and-drop application composition approach was deemed superior to developing in-house custom code that would be difficult to update over time.

"Appian is more than just a product to us," said Sheridan. "It is a pathway to Agile development, rapid delivery, gaining control of our work, and driving business transformation."

RMA selected [Appian's Application Platform](#) to drive definition and provide better requirements management throughout the organization. According to Sheridan, the



organization chose [cloud delivery](#) that would allow the organization to quickly develop a solution that covered such a wide range of users.

SOLUTION

RMA's first Appian Cloud deployment replaced their entire legacy system for managing all FCIC Escrow transactions.

Appian's business rules, alerts, and navigation linked directly to process actions and tasks delivers increased transparency into Escrow transactions, faster data-based decision making, operational efficiency in executing processes, and a complete audit trail including all content and collaborations.

RMA's new approach to delivering agile solutions is referred to internally as "RMAgile." Within this development framework, each sprint cycle releases production-ready code through a cloud platform that is flexible enough to drive on premise hosting changes.

"Appian has been a huge part of our effort to create agile processes throughout the business," said Sheridan. "The way in which our users are doing work has been fundamentally altered by the Appian social interface. The business community now sees IT as a solution for process excellence. I have organizations asking me for ways to implement the solutions we have built with Appian."

Moving forward, RMA has over two dozen ideas for additional enterprise solutions on the Appian platform. The goal is to modernize old workflows and document management solutions into modern digital business processes.

RESULTS

Through its Appian Cloud implementation, USDA RMA rolled out an Escrow solution that **delivered 110 percent of planned functionality for 90 percent of planned cost**. Appian has enabled parallel effort to upgrade to the latest product version at any time without any additional training. **The Escrow solution was the first agency application delivered in a Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) cloud environment, and was the first re-engineered RMA financial application to be used across the Appian social interface.**

Sheridan credits Appian's process agility in creating a more engaged internal workforce that is now better suited to deliver exceptional service to USDA's user community.

"Appian accelerated our legacy processes to something that is consistently delivering results to our business users," said Sheridan. "We now have informed decision-makers within the organization made possible by agility of the Appian Platform."

Appian

Appian delivers a modern enterprise platform for digital transformation that is accelerating solution delivery for the benefit of Government stakeholders. Powered by Business Process Management (BPM) capabilities, Appian's approach enables critical services at a lower cost than traditional software development methodologies. With Appian, Federal Government key initiatives, including: Constituent

Case Management, Regulatory and Statutory Compliance, Eligibility and Enrollment, Investigative Case Management, and Acquisition and Procurement can be easily deployed using our low-code approach, both in the cloud and on-premises.

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