VDM: The engine behind accelerated potato variety development

Chance encounters don't often lead to transformative change in an industry; so when Potatoes USA CEO, Blair Richardson, first crossed paths with Brad Halladay, founder of the software firm Medius Ag, there was little to suggest the ensuing partnership would culminate in the creation of the Variety Data Management (VDM) system, a now-indispensable asset to potato research and development.

While it sports a simple name, this tool is anything but. The VDM is a centralized data system that has taken potato research and development to new heights. With functionalities ranging from filters that cut across multiple trial years and locations to intricate data visualizations, the VDM allows for side-by-side variety comparison, benchmarking, and complex calculations involving specific gravity, yields, color, sugars, and an array of other agronomic and processing characteristics. All these capabilities come packaged in an attractive interface and sleek-looking design.

Brad worked closely with Potatoes USA and collaborators to ensure that every feature in the software serves a specific purpose. It's a practical philosophy that has paid dividends: a few weeks ago, at the National Fry Processing Trials Field Assessment, a participant voiced praise for the program, noting that he'd seen a marked improvement in the caliber of clones submitted for consideration every year. The VDM has played a crucial part in this year-over-year progress, bridging information gaps and bringing stakeholders closer together—particularly through its ability to show breeders the exact specifications that processors seek. In as little as four years, the VDM has propelled new variety development and commercialization, producing top-tier clones faster and with greater consistency than before.

Visit mediusag.com for more on Medius Ag and its product portfolio, which along with VDM includes a supply chain management tool. To browse more than 19,000 records, pull up detailed descriptions of clones, and watch how-to tutorials for VDM, head to potatoesusa.mediusag.com.