



**COMPANY**

Agri-Cover, Inc.

**HEADQUARTERS**

Jamestown, North Dakota

**INTERVIEWEE**

Joseph Tews,  
Microsoft Dynamics  
administrator

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**WEBSITE**

www.agricover.com

**ESTABLISHED**

1981

**NUMBER OF  
EMPLOYEES**

approximately 120

**MICROSOFT DYNAMICS GP  
USER SINCE**

2004

**NUMBER OF USERS**

40 concurrent

**GPUG®  
MEMBER SINCE**

2011



# Technology Has It Covered

**L**ocated near Jamestown, North Dakota, Agri-Cover was founded in 1981 as a manufacturer of grain truck covers. Over the years, as the company grew, its product line expanded to truck bed covers, including the Access® Roll-Up Cover, LiteRider®, Lorado®, Vanish®, and TonnoSport®. The truck bed covers are unique in that they were the first that could be rolled up and stored neatly behind the cab rather than having to be removed entirely for storage. In 2000, the company expanded yet again and introduced its SnowSport® Utility Plow, which enjoys a reputation as the most user-friendly and affordable snow plow on the market today, a claim backed by the company receiving the coveted GM Best New Product Design Award in 2003. Other awards the company has received include the North Dakota Business and Industrial Development Award, Occupational Safety Merit Award, Safety Achievement Award, and the Jamestown Business of the Year Award.

While Agri-Cover sells in the United States and Canada both through a network of dealers, a catalog, and its website, the operation is fairly consolidated, with 120 employees working in a single plant, so it's not surprising that the demands it places on its technology are fairly high.

After five years with a Microsoft Dynamics Partner, Joseph Tews joined Agri-Cover in 2012. As Microsoft Dynamics administrator, his job is to ensure that Microsoft Dynamics GP – as well as Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft Dynamics CRM – are operated optimally. "It's been a good transition for me, working with technology I know really well but going from having several clients to having just one, which is Agri-Cover," he says.

Since he's quite versed in all things Microsoft Dynamics GP, Tews is more familiar with how the technology benefits the company than most would be after less than a year on the job. "GP is our manufacturing backbone," he says. "It helps us automate across the system. It also handles our sales, accounting, and purchasing – our entire financial back end. It also manages an incredible volume of transactions that are generated by sales."

Tews believes there are two primary advantages to Microsoft Dynamics GP. The first is that having everything integrated – purchasing, sales, accounting, and manufacturing – makes

maintenance easier and more affordable. Secondly, because the technology is relied upon by so many organizations, it's not hard to find solid third-party add-ons. Tews estimates that Agri-Cover currently uses 15 to 20 add-ons, including a manufacturing pack offered by WilloWare, an ISV that specializes in Microsoft Dynamics GP, plus a customization. In fact, it's the add-ons that Tews sees as an impetus for the company's commitment to continuous improvement. "We're always looking at third-party products," he says. "We look at a number of add-ons each year just to look for ways we could make the business run more efficiently. We attend conferences and schedule demos. We are always looking for ways to improve."

One way Tews believes the company has improved is by leveraging the power of Microsoft SharePoint to beef up its intranet. "It used to just be for announcements and calendars, but now a number of departments have pages out there, and as we integrate different reports, it's gradually becoming a more integral part of the business," he says. "The biggest thing has been automating our processes and taking them to the next level." One of the areas where that's noticeable is the automation of various requests through the reviews and approvals process. For Users, rather than having to go to 14 separate people for a signature, they simply submit their request once. And it's paperless, which ties in to the company's Go Green program, which was launched in 2008 to reduce waste.

Tews says the company has also improved the way it uses Microsoft Dynamics GP by being an active participant in GPUG. "The biggest advantage is being able to access webinars, on demand and at an affordable rate, that provide training we couldn't get elsewhere," he says. "That, plus networking at conferences and events such as GPUG Summit, which are great places to learn from other Users and, at the same time, share what we know with others."

Like many, Tews has a packed schedule, but he doesn't let that get in the way of learning. "It's tough to find time in the day, but you can look and see what's coming up so you can plan ahead," he says. "You can participate in a webinar at lunch. I encourage everyone to go find a subject they think is useful, sign up for a webinar, and see what's out there. It's a great way to learn."

**GPUG**