# Nutanix Distributes Cloud-like Benefits to Leading European Meat Processing Company

## CHALLENGE

As a leading European producer of processed meat products the Zwanenberg Food Group had, over the years, embraced IT as an essential tool with which to support and grow its business. However, a mixed and ageing legacy infrastructure was now making it hard for the company to meet key targets, calling for an urgent re-think of its approach to IT going forward, as Eilko Bronsema, Manager IT at Zwanenberg Food Group explains.

"As well as the IT systems in our headquarters we were struggling with a mix of legacy servers and storage spread across seven plants, with patchy Internet connectivity and only partial virtualisation using a mix of hypervisors. Lack of performance and unreliability were constant problems, and management was very labour intensive with tape-based backup requiring engineers to drive to remote sites to collect and recover data."

Bronsema spent a long time researching possible solutions, including the use of the public cloud and, as a first step, switched the company to Office 365 rather than host email and office productivity programs in-house. However, when it came to the business-critical applications driving core production and distribution services across the Zwanenberg operation, the cloud was not seen as a viable option.

"Although the cloud would make management a lot easier, our main priority is keeping the plants working," said Bronsema. "Using the cloud would simply add extra risks by making us dependent on Internet connectivity to keep production lines running. Security would also be an issue as most of the equipment we use was never designed to be connected to the Internet and has no protection built in."

Beyond this, a much needed update of wide area connectivity services only served to highlight the performance and availability shortcomings of the existing infrastructure and the pressing need for a new approach.

## SOLUTION

With the assistance of Nutanix partner ICT Partners, Zwanenberg decided that a hyperconverged infrastructure was the best way forward and made the decision to migrate its entire infrastructure to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform, both at the headquarters in Almelo and at each of seven production sites located across the country.

"The Nutanix platform was exactly what we were looking for," said Bronsema, "delivering all the benefits of the public cloud in a format we could deploy on-site. The extra redundancy of the hyperconverged architecture also meant we would be able to guarantee availability, manage everything centrally and keep the entire distributed infrastructure up to date automatically without downtime."

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As part of the migration, Bronsema also opted to take advantage of the license-free Nutanix AHV hypervisor included as standard and use it instead of VMware or Hyper-V to consolidate virtualized workloads across the organization. Workloads that included not just back office services such as Windows domain, file and print servers, but SQL Server and Citrix XenApp workloads plus, of course, virtual servers hosting the food group's core food production, distribution and sales applications from specialist developer RBK.

Bronsema was also able to retire the inefficient tape-based backup and recovery system in favour of a highly automated and much more reliable solution, using snapshot technology included as a key component of the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud OS to replicate and recover data between locations.

"Instead of having to spend the best part of a day taking backups and driving tapes back and forward to HQ, it's now all done automatically. VM snapshots are taken at each location every two hours and stored on the central Nutanix cluster, added to which we have opted to use Commvault Data Platform software for backup and recovery as it is architected to work seamlessly with VMs running on the Nutanix AHV hypervisor."

## RESULTS
Following a period of testing and evaluation, the Almelo HQ and three key production sites, were quickly migrated to the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform, with around 50 VM workloads now hosted in the main datacentre and 8-10 on each remote cluster. Initial issues migrating older Windows servers were soon resolved and with the support of Nutanix and ICT Partners, the Zwanenberg team were able to move swiftly on to complete the project, on time and with clear and immediate benefits.

According to Bronsema, performance has been transformed and he has also been able to remove one of the two equipment racks previously employed in the Almelo datacentre. With everything now virtualised and hosted by the Nutanix AHV hypervisor, licensing costs have also been reduced and the infrastructure is already proving to be a lot more reliable.

It has been good news too for the IT support team who no longer need to drive to each site to fix problems or take backups, leaving much more time to investigate ways of leveraging the new infrastructure to support business processes.

"Instead of running around and firefighting we're able to work on a project basis and explore how we can support the business, not just the infrastructure," commented Bronsema. "For a small IT department like ours, the time won is precious but, above all, we have a situation of calm and rest with a stable IT environment that is always running, and that's worth a huge amount."

## NEXT STEPS
Thanks to careful sizing during the evaluation period, the Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Platform provides Zwanenberg Food Group with sufficient headroom to cope with both existing IT workloads and growth over the coming years. Moreover, scaling workloads is now a simple exercise whenever the need arises, just as it would be with the public cloud but from the security of a distributed network of on-premise datacentres.

In the longer term the company is also considering making better use of the cloud-native services , such as containers, available through the Nutanix platform to bring its business-critical applications as well as its infrastructure into the 21st Century.

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