Mole Valley Farmers

focus group

Our resilient SD-WAN solution has helped Mole Valley Farmers propel their IT infrastructure into the future and link sites in even the hardest-to-reach geographical locations.

Location: UK | Number of users: 1600+

The project

Mole Valley Farmers family have become a leading agricultural supply business across the length of Britain, employing 1,600+ people working out of 50+ mills, plants and stores in the UK.

However, the business needed a more sophisticated solution to accommodate their new Microsoft Dynamics AX enterprise resource planning (ERP) business management solution and to prepare for the possibility of a future VoIP telephone system deployment.

Ultimately, they required full resilience to prevent any loss of service, with security and 24/7 availability remaining central to their needs as connectivity was paramount for efficient stock control, production and distribution.

The solution

Our Cisco Meraki SD-WAN technology enabled easy growth of the existing network and propelled Mole Valley's IT infrastructure into the future. This solution would also link sites in even the hardest-to-reach geographical locations.

The introduction of software definition within the routing means all connections are available at any one time, and the decision on which is used is done dynamically on a packet-by-packet basis. This means that the network is inherently resilient and can failover between connections even midway through a voice call without interruption.

The data centre provides centralised breakout to the internet over multi-homed bandwidth and a direct interconnect to Gamma, providing SIP call traffic, which is then distributed over the network to individual branches.

Multiple leased lines of varying bandwidths create a high throughput resilient network. Up to 1Gbps ethernet access direct circuits connect the two HQ offices and data centre. This core leased line design gives Mole Valley the ability to host services at each of the three locations.

Mole Valley FARMERS
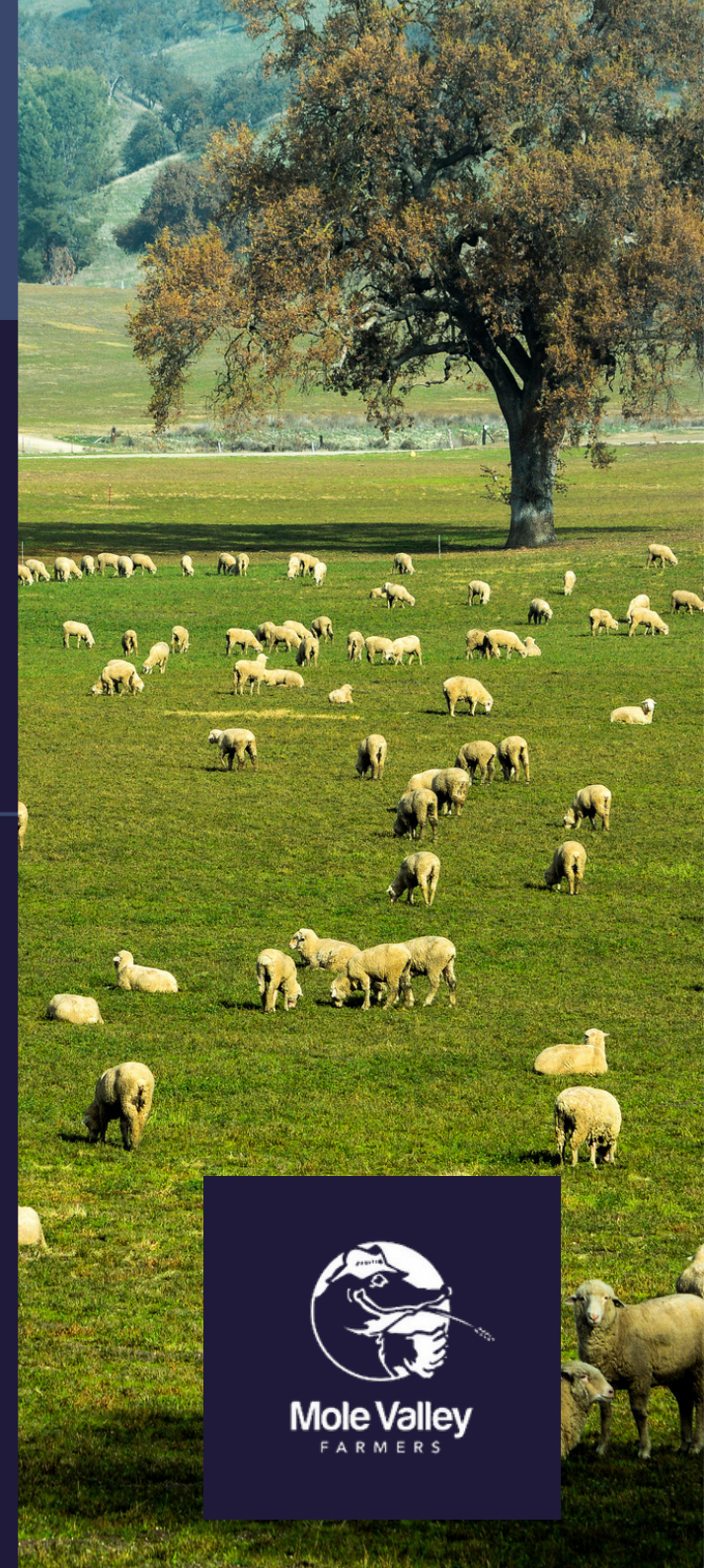
An MPLS network with DSL tails was provided to many of Mole Valley's shop locations. Private DSL is also utilised on a failover basis for larger shops and offices as an alternative to the primary leased lines. Because of the SD-WAN functionality, non-wired technologies like 4G are also used both for resilience and in locations when new acquisitions require instant connectivity.

Internet access is channelled via the data centre meaning that there are a reduced number of penetration points which simplifies security, compliance testing and protection against malicious attacks. End-user web access is then proxied and protected by Cisco ASA PCI-compliant failover firewalls.

The results

Mole Valley's IT department benefits from enhanced provisioning with a dedicated mailbox direct to our staff for instant order confirmation and fast-track carrier orders. A senior project manager oversees all installations daily. They also benefit from a management web portal
to monitor network uptime, bandwidth utilisation, traffic flow and any configuration change history.

The added benefit is that web access can be easily flexed depending on future requirements centrally. Having a main point offering internet access rather than individual links at multiple offices has centralised web security and made compliance with standards such as PCI DSS easier to implement and maintain.

Mole Valley has truly leveraged their investment. This low latency, dynamic and high-speed network means real-time applications, such as VoIP, can be deployed to deliver measurable improvements in communication.

"From a personal point of view, I know they are just a phone call away should I require any assistance or need to report an issue. I have a good relationship with our account manager and the networks team, and I trust their expertise implicitly. I would have no hesitation in recommending them to other large, multi-site businesses and organisations."

Arron Watson, Head of IT