

Press release

Royal Canin South Africa chooses Hardis Group's Reflex WMS to optimize its inventory management

Following Belgium, Switzerland and France, Royal Canin South Africa installs Reflex WMS to optimize the management of its inventory. Hardis Group's warehouse management solution is now listed in the group's official catalog of software applications.

Grenoble, October 29, 2014 – Hardis Group, a digital services company and business software publisher, announces that the South African subsidiary of the Royal Canin group, French manufacturer and worldwide supplier of nutritional requirements for protecting the health of dogs and cats, has decided to deploy Reflex WMS in its factory and three distribution centers. Objective: to optimize the management of its inventories, limit any losses and provide better traceability of finished products. Hardis Group's warehouse management solution is now deployed at Royal Canin in Belgium, Switzerland, France, and South Africa.

Royal Canin: an international group

Established in 1967 in the South of France, Royal Canin creates formulas and manufactures and distributes its dog and cat food through various different circuits (veterinarians, breeders and specialist stores). Forming part of the Mars group since 2002, Royal Canin has more than 6,000 employees and is currently present in 90 countries, with 12 production units around the world.

Royal Canin's nutritional product and formula R&D is centralized in France. However, the group has opted to favor supplies from locally selected producers close to the production units, and distribution models adapted to each target market. Royal Canin South Africa for example now has a factory and three distribution centers processing an average of 10,000 sacks a day. Inventories are managed on a FIFO basis to limit the risk of loss, but above all to assure the quality and dietary safety of the perishable products.

WMS: evolution or revolution?

The WMS initially deployed by Royal Canin South Africa was rather inflexible and not very evolutive, so it was no longer possible to manage inventory rotation and product traceability correctly. *"We produce to order so that animals can consume the freshest possible products. Managing our inventories by approximation is out of the question, given our commitment to the animals. What's more, in accordance with the Mars Group's traceability standards and best practices, we have to be able to identify any sub-standard products in a matter of hours,"* explains Frédéric Desbrosses, Managing Director of Royal Canin South Africa.

So in 2012 the company had to decide whether to redevelop the system or to replace it. Three options were looked at: a specific development based on the existing WMS solution, adopting the WMS module of the group ERP, or choosing a new warehouse management solution. The third option quickly gained favor: deployed by Royal Canin since 2008 in Belgium and 2009 in Switzerland, Hardis Group's WMS had proven its ability to manage production and distribution sites at the same time, with high volumes and tight constraints. The choice was confirmed definitively following visits by Royal Canin South Africa's teams to the European sites already

equipped with the system. *"Feedback from both users and managers at the Belgian and Swiss sites was very positive,"* Frédéric Desbrosses recalls.

Strong commitment by Hardis Group teams

As soon as the project was launched, a Hardis Group team was immediately deployed *in situ*, to support the company, from the study of requirements through to the roll-out of the solution. The project was divided into three phases: the first involved the factory in Johannesburg and the distribution platform located nearby, representing approximately 60% of the products manufactured and supplied by Royal Canin South Africa.

After several months of studies, parameterization and tests, the solution, hosted internally, was rolled out in September 2013. *"Hardis' experts accompanied us right through to the end, including change management, which was not always simple,"* Frédéric Desbrosses stresses. *"Reflex WMS is very structuring, and it forced us to revise and harmonize many of our business processes"*. These efforts have borne fruit, with significant gains in terms of optimization of inventory management, product traceability and team efficiency.

Once it was operational at the Johannesburg production and distribution sites, Reflex WMS was installed at the Cape Town distribution center. In 2015 it will be the Durban distribution center's turn.

In parallel, Hardis Group's warehouse management solution, already operational at Royal Canin France's two production sites, is in the process of being rolled out in its 15 distribution centers. It is now included in the group's official software catalog.

About Hardis Group

Hardis Group carries on the dual business of digital services and software publishing. The company supports its clients end-to-end in the transformation and performance of their information systems and supply chains, as well as in their digital transition. Thanks to its long-standing dual positioning, Hardis Group has developed business expertise in the insurance and e-health sectors, in retail and FMCG distribution, manufacturing industry and energy and logistics services. This expertise enables it to offer its clients global responses to their needs, with an agile approach based on joint construction, innovation and continuous improvement.

Since its creation in 1984 the company has based its growth on a pragmatic approach and on values of efficiency and strong commitment, both with its 2,500 clients and with its 650 employees (25% of whom are shareholders). Hardis Group posted turnover figures of €57.2 million in 2013. The group, whose headquarters are in Grenoble, has four other agencies in Lyon, Paris, Lille and Nantes.

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