



Switching

to AT&T Fiber levels
the playing field for
Armstrong's Cricket Farm

- **Business needs** - Armstrong's Cricket Farm needed faster, more reliable voice and internet services to support its growing business.
- **Networking solution** - Speedy and reliable internet and voice services powered by AT&T Fiber support the successful farm and distribution center operations.
- **Business value** - Armstrong's Cricket Farm enjoys a competitive advantage in the agribusiness marketplace, enhanced customer service, and lower costs.
- **Industry focus** - Agriculture
- **Size** - Two locations

About Armstrong's Cricket Farm

Armstrong's Cricket Farm has the undisputed claim of being the oldest established cricket grower in the U.S. For more than 73 years the Armstrong family has provided personal customer service and quality products with a live delivery guarantee.

The situation

The successful cricket farm and distribution center needed faster, more reliable voice and internet services to support its expanding operations. However, the company's rural location made it difficult for some providers to supply the necessary bandwidth. Armstrong's Cricket Farm needed a solid, top-tier solution that could scale with its business.

Solution

An AT&T bundle of dedicated voice and internet is a highly reliable, high-performing, bundled service that keeps Armstrong's business connected and running efficiently. The services are built on AT&T Fiber technology, which powers ultra-fast, symmetrical upload and download speeds from 1.5 Megabytes per second to 1 Terabyte per second to support the expanding company's demands.

A business launched from a bucket of crickets

Crickets are considered good luck in many cultures. Whether it was luck or the foresight, imagination, and business acumen of 4 generations, the Armstrong family has built a successful cricket farming business that has thrived for 7 decades.

The company began when Gene Armstrong accidentally began breeding the insects in the mid-1940s. He placed a few crickets into a bucket that had sand in the bottom and within weeks he had a month's supply of excellent live bait for fishing. His father Tal, who owned a profitable plumbing business, recognized the possibilities of raising crickets to sell to fishermen in his Georgia community, and Armstrong's Cricket Farm was born.

The Armstrongs' friends and neighbors were initially skeptical about the idea. "Even my best friends laughed when I quit a prosperous plumbing business and spent \$10,000 to start this new endeavor," Tal Armstrong said. But his instincts were on the money, and the business was an immediate hit. South Georgia fishermen who used to spend hours

searching for crickets to use as bait found it much simpler just to buy them from Armstrong's.

"We became the first cricket farm in the U.S.," said Brandon Armstrong, today the chief operating officer of Armstrong's Cricket Farm. "My great-grandfather was an avid fisherman. He found one species to be a better species of cricket for fishing. That species was the *Acheta domestica*, which is a favorite of reptiles, because it has a soft exoskeleton and scent," he said. "We have raised this cricket since 1947."

Keeping up with increasing demand

Within 2 years, Armstrong's Cricket Farm became the nation's first commercial cricket grower. In addition to selling the best live bait for bream, perch, and catfish, the company soon expanded to providing crickets as food for pet reptiles and amphibians.

"Our major customers have been large retail pet stores, and we also sell to small retail stores and directly to consumers," Armstrong said. "More recently we've been selling frozen crickets to be processed into a powder for human consumption."





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Chief Operating Officer, Armstrong’s Cricket Farms

Steady demand led Armstrong to start another farm in 1954, in West Monroe, Louisiana. The second location made it easier to supply crickets to customers in the Western U.S. In addition, having two farms keeps the breeds of live feeder insects pure, disease free, and always in stock. More recently, the company added worms to its inventory to meet increasing demand from pet owners, bait stores, zoos, pet shops, and individuals who own reptiles, birds, and fish.

As it expanded its operations, the company kept pace with communications innovations. “When my grandfather started, it was all word of mouth,” Armstrong said. “From there it was telephones in the

70s and 80s. In the 90s the advent of the internet kept us moving forward.”

But businesses in rural locations can’t always keep up with the demand for bandwidth. Armstrong’s Cricket Farm needed more reliable phone services and a high-speed internet that could better support its growing business.

Saving money, increasing reliability

AT&T provided Armstrong’s Cricket Farm with an affordable bundled voice and internet solution designed to scale easily as the company continues to grow. Powering these services with AT&T Fiber technology increases the business’s network speed and enhances network capabilities.

Fiber uses light waves instead of electrical signals to transmit data. This is important for a rural business such as Armstrong’s, because distance from the network is no longer an issue. AT&T has the nation’s largest fiber network, and AT&T Fiber internet offers the fastest upload and download speeds.

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Reliability, scalability, economy

Armstrong’s Cricket Farm has become a loyal AT&T customer. The company’s AT&T account representative initially approached company leaders with a plan to replace the copper lines the company had been

using for its voice services. Armstrong officials saw immediately that moving to a fiber infrastructure could increase reliability, save money, and create a foundation that would easily accommodate new services in the future.

For instance, the company is considering launching a new division focused on bait and tackle supplies. Having a relationship with AT&T will enable it to scale its network services to accommodate this and any other new lines of business the company develops.

The account rep said he was pleased to be able to find a solution for a company in his hometown that will help it continue to thrive. And COO Armstrong said he's grateful that his rural company is able to take

advantage of the same services that businesses in big cities can leverage.

"AT&T coming into the smaller markets helps us compete with larger markets and helps us to level the playing field," Armstrong said.

