

CASE STUDY | CHS ONEWEIGH™

Then & Now: CHS, Inc. on 6 Years with Cutura's Scale Automation Solution

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A TOP-NOTCH PROGRAM: CHS, INC. GRAIN TERMINAL IN SAVAGE, MN VALUES ONEWEIGH SOFTWARE'S RELIABILITY

Taking newly-installed computer software for a leisurely test drive to make sure there aren't any bugs to work out, before going for the full spin, is considered the ideal situation. But that wasn't the case in late February 2011 when the CHS, Inc. grain terminal in Savage, MN on the Minnesota River (651-355-6560) switched over to the oneWeigh™ scale automation system from Cultura Technologies, Alpharetta, GA (800-518-0472). When the new software installation was made, the Minnesota River had breached its banks, and the terminal was shut down.

A RIGOROUS TEST

“If there ever was a rigorous test for just how well a software system could work, this had to be it,” recalls Superintendent Greg Oberle. “Once the flooding subsided, the terminal was already facing a backlog of inbound grain trucks. To catch up, the terminal was soon handling 400 to 500 trucks daily using oneWeigh. While these volumes aren't all that unusual at the terminal, the situation was still less than ideal for testing a new system because there was virtually no opportunity for training,” he says.

During this challenging period, the staff at the terminal, says Oberle, couldn't have been happier about how well the software performed. “Our personnel really liked the program's reliability and seamless operation,” he says. “The oneWeigh software is pretty amazing.”

A TRUCK, RAIL, AND BARGE TERMINAL

The terminal handles an average of approximately 60 million bushels of grain yearly consisting primarily of corn, soybeans, and small grains such as wheat, barley, and oats. For inbound grain, about 90% is delivered by truck and 10% by rail. For outbound shipments, barge accounts for 80% and rail 20% of the volume. “While barge still is the chief mode for outbound shipments, the terminal has loaded an average of ten to twenty 90-car shuttles during the past few years,” says Oberle.

The terminal has three inbound platform scales—two 75-foot-long, hydraulic-lift platform Fairbanks truck scales, and one scale for unloading railcars and, if needed, during high-volume periods involving inbound trucks. A Mettler-Toledo bulk weigh scale with a oneWeigh bulkweighing controller also is used for outbound rail and outbound barge, at a rate of 50,000 bph.

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IMPROVED BULKWEIGHING CAPACITY

“With the oneWeigh software system, the terminal has greatly improved its bulkweighing capacity and efficiency,” adds Oberle. “The weigh scale data is uploaded daily to the IT department at CHS, Inc.’s corporate headquarters in Inver Grove Heights, MN, which is 20 miles from the terminal.”

In addition, relates Oberle, the Cultura software can be upgraded easily and is very expandable and flexible, which are very important. “At some point in the future, for example, the terminal may elect to automate the scale systems further by adding card readers, outdoor ticket printers, and electronic signage to direct truck delivery traffic and to enhance better communication with the drivers,” says Oberle. “These beneficial add-ons can be accomplished easily with the Cultura software.”

Cultura Technologies also stays in touch with the terminal very well, especially if any software updates are available, according to Oberle.

THEN & NOW: 4 YEAR UPDATE

CHS has now been using oneWeigh™ for close to 6 years. In November of 2016, Solentra (formerly the Cultura Enterprise Group) followed up with Greg Oberle to assess how the solution is performing for CHS.

Over the last several years, Greg noted the volume improvements CHS was able to handle due to the implementation of oneWeigh™. He stated, “in just this year, we had a major volume increase and were able to unload over 50,000 trucks on the system with very few issues. oneWeigh™ is a bulletproof system that just keeps on working. Over the past few years, we’ve seen an overall 40-50% increase in bushels handled – essentially we’ve doubled our throughput since our install four years ago.”

He continued, “Our success with oneWeigh™ has encouraged us to look at other areas to upgrade our processes with more automation. Because of the stability and reliability of the system, we are looking for other opportunities to partner with Cultura.”

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About Solentra

Solentra is an agri-business services and software business that delivers solutions to meet the demands of our customers across the global agriculture sector. As a business partner, Solentra serves customers with our industry expertise that includes an exclusive focus and decades of industry knowledge in agri-business and agri-food technology, innovative teams, and an extensive and growing list of products and services. We acquire, develop, and deploy efficient and reliable solutions on our customers’ behalf.

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