

Automated Annex

COMPUWEIGH SMARTTRUCK SYSTEM FORMS INTEGRAL PART OF PRODUCT FLOW



Truck receiving operations at the AC Grain rail terminal in Dana, IN, include a scalehouse, probe station, and pair of Fairbanks inbound and outbound scales, all under the control of a CompuWeigh SmartTruck automation system. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

On Dec. 1, 2011, the former Cargill AgHorizons elevator at Dana, IN (765-665-0135) became **AC Grain LLC**, a 50-50 partnership between Cargill and Agrex Inc., Overland Park, KS.

That freed up a lot of capital for upgrading the rail-loading terminal by building a 9-million-bushel-plus annex on the south side of the CSX rail line opposite the original 1.6-million-bushel concrete and steel grain elevator constructed in the 1960s.

AC Grain constructed a gigantic 9-million-bushel steel flat storage building plus a 160,000-bushel

corrugated steel wet tank, a pair of enclosed receiving pits feeding a pair of 25,000-bph legs, a 10,000-bph Zimmerman tower dryer, and a scalehouse



AC Grain's 9-million-bushel annex includes a flat storage building, upright wet tank, two receiving pits and legs, and a grain dryer, all of which went operational in 2013.

outfitted with a pair of 12-foot-x-80-foot Fairbanks pitless truck scales and a Gamet JaHam truck probe.

Truck Flow Automation

To automate the inbound and outbound scales and coordinate the traffic flow, AC Grain selected a **Smart-Truck scale automation system** from **CompuWeigh Corp.**, Woodbury, CT (203-262-9400).

General Manager **John Thomas**, who came to Dana shortly after the formation of AC Grain from another Cargill rail terminal in nearby Tuscola, IL, says he was familiar with SmartTruck from reviewing a potential purchase at Tuscola. He notes that AC Grain looked at a number of scale automation systems, but the CompuWeigh system was appealing for several reasons:

- Truck drivers do not need to reach out of their cab window with an ID card at each stop potentially dropping the card and holding up the line. Instead, the RF antenna can read the card as it is hung from the passenger side sun visor (approximately 20-foot range).

- Labor is minimal, as the truck is probed and then moves on to the inbound scale. The RF tag is read, the gross weight is recorded, and utilizing SmartChoice, the truck is directed automatically to the correct pit by the SmartView message board.

- After unloading, SmartTruck automatically records the tare weight and prints out a scale ticket, so the driver never has to leave the cab.

“Our goal is to keep the trucks moving through the facility in five to seven minutes,” Thomas says. “We had a large harvest in 2013, but we were able to keep the trucks moving through the line.”

Ed Zdrojewski, editor