

Scale Bottleneck Removed

INDIANA GRAIN HANDLER USES SMARTTRUCK SYSTEM TO KEEP THE LINES MOVING



CompuWeigh SmartTruck equipment installed on a truck probe lane (left) and outbound scale (right) at Kokomo Grain in Edinburgh, IN include RF tag readers, SmartView message boards, and video cameras. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

Keeping the truck lines moving at harvest is a perennial challenge at most grain elevators. Back in 2008, **Kokomo Grain Co. Inc.** took on the challenge by adding a third receiving pit at its branch elevator in Edinburgh, IN (812-526-5574).

That did work, says Plant Manager Phil Gorrell, insofar as speeding up the time that it takes for the elevator to receiving grain, roughly 10 million bushels per year, and it also increased the flexibility to receive more than one crop at a time.

But it also contributed to moving the harvest time bottleneck back to the scales, where Kokomo Grain personnel conducted weighing and grading operations.

Top managers at the company headquarters in Kokomo, IN were aware of the problems, and in 2012, they installed a potential solution on a trial basis at Edinburgh.

“Our top managers have always supported the use of new technology to make our operations as efficient as possible,” Gorrell explains. “In the spring, (Engineering and Operations Manager) **Brad Ortman** came down with a salesperson from **CompuWeigh** (Woodbury, CT/203-262-9400). We purchased a **SmartTruck** scale management system on a trial basis.”

The idea was that if the system

worked well in Edinburgh, the company would consider installing it at all nine of its grain-handling locations.

Traffic Management

Over the summer, the SmartTruck system was installed on the facility’s two truck scales, the inbound scale adjacent to the facility’s flat storage and an outbound scale adjacent to a probe lane next to the office building. It included RF tag readers

on the inbound scales, **SmartView** message boards on both scales and the truck probe lane, a scale ticket printer by the outbound scale, video cameras on both scales, and video screens in the office programmed to display driver names, truck ID, weights, and grades, as well as the view from the cameras. The system went operational in August.

“We probe trucks ahead of the inbound scales, and by the time they reach the scale, we have the samples graded, and they can view the grade on the SmartView, if they like,” Gorrell says. “We’re also set up to print multiple copies of scale tickets by the outbound scale, so truckers can keep a copy and provide copies to multiple producers, as needed.”

Merchandiser **Andy Fry** says it took about a week for Kokomo Grain personnel to get up to speed on using the SmartTruck system.

Drought-stricken crops in southern Indiana were short, so the elevator never processed more than 220 trucks a day during the 2012 harvest, but in a normal year, he says, the facility could process up to 400 trucks easily with the SmartTruck system.

Ed Zdrojewski, editor



Plant Manager Phil Gorrell (left) and Merchandiser Andy Fry are shown with scale readout screens in the facility office and lab.