

Keeping It Moving

SmartTouch Helps Ethanol Plant Meet New FSMA Rules



CompuWeigh's SmartTouch screen asks drivers who have carried at-risk material to show their wash ticket to the scalehouse.

With the passage of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), managers at Quad County Corn Processors (QCCP), a 35-million-gallon-a-year ethanol producer in Galva, IA, knew they were going to be presented with possible bottlenecks to the efficient management of in coming and out going truck traffic at the plant.

Josh Droegmiller, IT systems manager at QCCP, said that when the ethanol decided to install CompuWeigh's SmartTruck system with RFID at the plant in April 2016, it added the company's SmartTouch system to the plant's weigh in and weigh out procedures. "We knew the new FSMA regulations were coming and we tried to marry the new FSMA rules with the CompuWeigh solution."

The SmartTouch system, distributed by CompuWeigh Corp., Woodbury, CT (203-262-9400), went online Aug. 1 at QCCP. "It's been working very well," Droegmiller stated. "There's always some transition required with any new system, but the CompuWeigh team has been very responsive."

Droegmiller said that QCCP managers first became aware of CompuWeigh's



Quad County Corn Processors switched on CompuWeigh's SmartTruck system with SmartTouch on Aug. 1.

product line when they looked for a way to improve the throughput of trucks coming into and leaving the plant. "Drivers had to get out of the truck to go get their scale ticket and that would slow down the process of everything coming in," Droegmiller noted. "Our search for a solution to that problem led us to CompuWeigh and their wonderful portfolio of products. When the management team at QCCP reviewed CompuWeigh's product offerings, we immediately thought that we should introduce their equipment to the site."

Deploying SmartTouch

Working with CompuWeigh, managers at QCCP developed a plan that allowed QCCP to deploy CompuWeigh's SmartTouch screen at the inbound scale. "It's been a great fit with what we were trying to do," Droegmiller noted. "It's a great solution for the problem and was a natural next step."

The system makes it easier for plant personnel to identify and track shipments coming into and out of the plant and is much more intuitive for the drivers to use, according to Droegmiller. "It has a graphic display with a touch screen that is easy to interact with," he stated.

The addition of the SmartTouch

system to CompuWeigh's SmartTruck added a level of automation to the plant's throughput that has kept truck traffic moving efficiently even with the increased demands from the new FSMA regulations.

The new regulations require that vehicles and transportation equipment used in moving animal and human food products, such as dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS) and corn oil, be cleaned if they have previously handled cargo considered unsafe.

An example of how the CompuWeigh SmartTouch screens help automate shipments from the plant is the "At Risk Materials" screen on the SmartTouch system. The screen asks drivers if they have had at-risk materials in their previous loads and has a list of the at-risk materials that they need to be aware of. If the driver answers "yes" to the question, then he has to show a wash-out ticket.

In addition to meeting QCCP's goals of improving throughput, SmartTouch also adds more control to the delivery process. "Transaction data is visually presented to the driver, which helps reduce errors with the scalehouse," Droegmiller said.

Installing SmartTouch "was a big win for us in complying with the FSMA without burdening the driver or our scalehouse personnel," Droegmiller stated.