

Truck Supervisor Case Study
Dan Brick
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850-Cow Dairy Saves up to \$100,000 Per Year Using Truck Supervisor

Dan Brick of Brickstead Dairy learned that a truck scale without a means to automatically record weights is just a scale and only as accurate as what the driver writes down. “We used a scale to weigh incoming feed but relied on drivers to record data about their load on paper,” says Brick. “Drivers wrote down weights; we punched tickets.” Brick soon discovered the limitations of this manual system as, “Errors were common and it wasn’t always easy to read their writing.” Forced to sort and compute numbers by hand, the Greenleaf, Wis. farm was also stuck with a slew of data entry.

The time-consuming process turned out to be an unreliable and inefficient solution for recording incoming feed weights on a farm raising 1,000 acres and contracting 500 acres of purchased feed for their 850-cow herd. “It actually endangered relationships with our growers,” Brick says. “When purchasing corn silage, it potentially cost us \$8,000 to \$10,000 if a driver made a mistake. At \$50 per ton, each slipup could easily total \$2,000. Even if the mistake was in our favor, it was costly because it could ruin our relationship with that grower.”

After three years of sifting through piles of papers – including scale tickets, load tickets and more – the dairy decided to automate the system by adding Truck Supervisor™ to their existing scale. A truck scale interface that automatically records accurate data on incoming and outgoing feeds, Truck Supervisor has proven to be a time- and money-saving solution for Brickstead Dairy.

A big boost to profitability, Brick estimates that Truck Supervisor has increased weight recording accuracy by 3 to 4 percent. “With \$2.5 million worth of feed going across our scale each year, that’s an annual savings of \$75,000 to \$100,000,” he notes. “Dealing with this volume of feed, we were able to recoup our investment in Truck Supervisor within a single year.”

In its fourth year of use at Brickstead Dairy, Truck Supervisor is helping create better relationships with the farm’s growers. “It makes us a credible buyer, which has opened up more possibilities for buying feed,” says Brick. “Growers have confidence in Truck Supervisor – they know they’ll receive full value for their crops; we’re not just shooting them a number. If at the end of the season, someone feels they were burned on a price they gave and how many tons were out there, we have proof to back it up.”

Brick says Truck Supervisor also makes it incredibly easy to see how much inventory the farm has and its value down at the feed center. “I check the computer every morning to find out what needs to be ordered,” explains Brick. “It beats going around knocking on feed bins and guessing. Now we have exact numbers so there’s no risk of running out or having to make ration changes on short notice. Truck Supervisor provides hard data that gives us greater knowledge of inventory levels, and knowledge is power.”

Truck Supervisor downloads data directly into Feed Supervisor®, a feed management solution that monitors daily dry matter intakes and regulates rations to improve feed efficiency, allowing Brick to make quick comparisons regarding dry matter intake versus milk shipped that day, for

example. "I like the ability to link the two programs together," he says. Both systems are marketed under Supervisor Systems, a division of KS Dairy Consulting, Inc.

Using Truck Supervisor data from an agronomy standpoint to determine yield count and return per acre, Brick says, "The system helps us examine the productivity of every crop from every field." The farm's ongoing alfalfa trials provide an opportunity to experiment with different seed varieties and fertilizer applications, while Truck Supervisor helps them decide which varieties are most effective to plant.

The truck scale interface is also helping this farm reduce shrink. "We calculate shrink on each bunker quarterly and have made changes based on our findings, such as incorporating new ways of loading and unloading into our commodity shed and utilizing a different type of trucking for bringing in product," says Brick. "As a result, we're actually surpassing industry shrink standards."

Weighing every purchased and harvested feed ingredient, Brickstead Dairy also uses Truck Supervisor to double-check milk weights. "We have two bulk tanks with one load picked up daily and two loads every second or third day," Brick says. "Every month we make sure what went across the scale matches what we have on our ticket." They also use the system for tracking other deliveries, such as sand bedding. "With Truck Supervisor, it's obvious if a load doesn't come in."

Drivers delivering feed are a fan of the system's ease and flexibility. "No matter what time of day they arrive, a driver can scan his RFID card and accurately record the weight with very little effort," says Brick. "There's nothing to mess up or explain because Truck Supervisor is a fool-proof system. It doesn't make mistakes."