

DSL News

January 2009

Special points of interest:

- DSL's new web site
- New staff at DSL
- Moisture monitoring and control
- SIRT

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AutoPilot4Feed still the most powerful

We are continually improving **AutoPilot4Feed** (and **AutoPilot4Flour** for flour mills) and have added many new and improved features. The latest version installed is V6.07.

AutoPilot4Feed continues to be installed in many Feed Mills, Pet Food and similar factories around the world. DSL Systems has a very active partner in Canada who installs many systems in North America. We continue to develop **AutoPilot4Feed** to add new features, speed up operation and simplify its use.



AutoPilot4Feed - scaleable for any size of mill

New web site

We urge you to visit our new and improved web site www.dsl-systems.com. It has been totally re-organised with new details, case histories, recent news, specifications and a new technical library. If you are a DSL user, the technical library can be very useful—please contact DSL for the password to this area.

New 24 hour support line

We have recently simplified the method for customers to get support out of hours. All new installations come with 24 hour support for 12 months (the warranty period) and afterwards by means of a support

contract. The new out of hours method is by means of a single telephone number. Then, depending on which type of system you have, you are transferred directly to a relevant support engineer who can deal with the problem.

Windows Vista update

Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system has been with us for a while and has now been given a service pack (a number of fault fixes). We have installed some remote PCs (operator

workstations) with Vista but we are still using Windows XP Pro or Windows Server for Control and Standby PCs until reliability is assured. Microsoft has announced the next version of Windows

(called Windows 7 at the moment) so we will be monitoring developments here.



AutoPilot4Feed continues to be upgraded and improved

Improvements to pellet press control

- Since the throughput and quality of the pellet press process is often paramount in a feed mill, we continually try to improve this area of control.
1. Managers can now prevent operators from running a pellet press slowly by means of a new feature. If the operator starts a feeder slowly, the control can add 1/2 tph every few minutes until the target amps hit 90% of the maximum amps. All parameters are of course variable.
 2. There is a separate cross contamination matrix for products going through the pellet presses.
 3. Fully automatic pellet press starts minimise the time between runs. If the destination bins are entered in advance into the main production schedule, the operator doesn't have to do anything; the new run will start without any operator intervention.
 4. Zero gap changeovers let you swap from one product to another without any gap whatsoever. You would normally only use this feature when swapping between very similar products and the system can be tuned to be safe to swap from a lower to a higher specification product (or visa versa).
 5. Pellet press logging has been optimised and now stores the data in a condensed format. This means that you can store much more data for much longer—even many years.
 6. Run reports now have graphs built in to give a quick view of the important parameters.



Example of a new 2D Data Matrix barcode

New format for barcodes

IFAH (International Federation for Animal Health) has introduced a new global standard for barcodes. The new barcode is a 2 dimensional (2D) Data Matrix format (see picture) which can hold much more information than the traditional one dimensional barcode. The standard also defines the information contained in the barcode. The important thing to note is that a different type of barcode reader is required so if you are replacing a faulty barcode reader or considering a new one then we recommend that you install a 2 dimensional type. We can advise you on suitable rugged versions.

Andrew Fentiman joins DSL's commissioning



Our site configuration and commissioning team has been expanded with the arrival of

Andrew Fentiman. Andrew, 30 was previously a plant technician with Nestlé, York and has varied and extensive experience. He has particular experience with Allen Bradley and PLCs and is keen on racquet sports such as tennis and squash.

Martin Osgathorpe joins DSL



Martin Osgathorpe joins DSL's experienced programming team as a Software Engineer. He was previously at Ericson communications and will be working mainly on DSL's front end and user programs.

Plan4Feed expanded

Plan4Feed is **AutoPilot4Feed's** powerful production scheduling system which simplifies this process. It helps by graphically showing future scheduling problems such as cross contamination holds and stock shortages. **Plan4Feed** usually has product orders fed into it

automatically but now has a new mode called Kanban. Kanban is a Japanese production technique which lets you schedule high volume products from what has been delivered rather than specific orders. Because these are high volume products, Kanban automatically schedules long

product runs which in turn improves efficiency in a plant. This is a rather simplistic description of course and so if you think this may be of interest to you then please contact DSL Systems. Existing users on versions V6.03 and later can have a trial system installed.

Successful moisture monitoring and control

January 2009



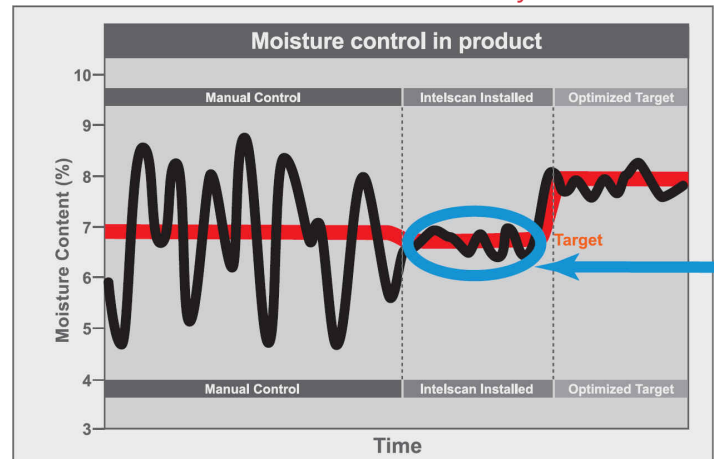
We have successfully concluded the moisture meter trials at customers' sites and the first installations have started. The moisture meter is from Intelscan and they have

developed the unit which also measures density. Once density is known an accurate moisture level can be measured. Adding extra moisture depending on the product, time of year and other

parameters is then straightforward and is financially very beneficial. The moisture meter is available separately if required.



The moisture meter and water addition pipes



Accurate moisture measurements allow you to raise the moisture target level

SIRT

We have recently integrated control of CPM's **SIRT** meal heat conditioning system into **AutoPilot4Feed**. Having the system integrated with the rest of the mill simplifies and speeds up operation, centralises logging / recording and prevents mistakes.

Real-time simulation

AutoPilot4Feed now has accurate and realistic real-time simulation built in. If you are designing a new plant or considering a modification to speed up weighing or batching then you can model the new plant with **AutoPilot4Feed**. You can check throughputs and even change the configuration or conveyor capacities whilst you are batching different products. **AutoPilot4Feed** will then show you what the actual throughput will be.

AutoPilot4Feed can now integrate with twelve different standard office computer systems

Improved Reliability

Over the years, we have discovered that many PC failures occurred because of hard disk failures. This is especially annoying because of the time taken to set up the new disk and then test it out. We have now installed many diskless "thin client"

PCs which look like a normal PC but effectively run on the host "server" PC. Thin client PCs are suitable for any remote PCs with just a single display such as hand additive PCs, outloading workstations and so on. We are

also seeing new PCs on the market with solid state drives (SSDs) to replace the hard disk drives. These are faster than hard disk drives and more durable but for the moment more expensive. However the price is sure to come down.

'History' improved

Being able to see who has modified what is becoming increasingly important. We have therefore improved this area of recording by removing a limit on the history of changes made (previously this was the last 6 changes). **AutoPilot4Feed** also now

records the history of changes in many more areas.

For the alarm / audit log, you can now see the user id as well as which PC was used for any changes, overrides or acknowledgements.

For critical selections or overrides via the colour graphics **AutoPilot4Feed** can now optionally ask the operator to enter his / her initials which are then recorded in the long term audit trail.

Faster, cheaper access

Our 24 hour / 7 day support is second to none. Most of the time we can connect to your control system directly over the

internet using broadband. This is not only much faster, it also works out to be very economical. Our charges for modifications are therefore

kept to a minimum. It also means that we can set up the system to allow you or your own engineers direct access from home.

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Another successful
AutoPilot4Feed
installation

World Class Process Control

“DSL’s AutoPilot4Feed is far more user-friendly and much easier for less experienced operators. The upgrade to DSL’s AutoPilot4Feed was carefully planned and went much smoother than expected—very impressive”

Peter Marsland—Carrs
Billington Agriculture
(Operations)

2009 Training Dates

Advanced Training:- March 18/19 and September 23/24
Maintenance Engineers:- May 13 and November 11
Mill Managers:- April 15 and October 21
Crystal Reports:- March 11/12 and September 16/17

Please contact DSL to book places or visit our web site www.dsl-systems.com for further details or to download a booking form.

Factory Managers

We can now provide specific training for factory managers and others in similar roles. The one day course includes details on how to get the most out of **AutoPilot4Feed**, where information is stored, how to access it, how to investigate problems, advanced analysis of production figures etc. The course includes a full set of documentation so that the attendees can refer back to the notes at any time.

For further information.....

If you would like further information, please telephone DSL Systems on +44 (0)115 981 3700.

or email :- mail@dsl-systems.com. If this was sent to you in error then please let us know who it should be sent to.

The future

We shall continue to develop **AutoPilot4Feed** and **AutoPilot4Flour** so that they remain the most comprehensive control systems for feed mills, pet food plants, flour mills and similar factories. Specific areas for significant development include:-

- Driver operated main gate weighbridge control with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).
- A managers summary display “Dashboard” of all the relevant mill performance values, throughput, utilisation, downtime and trends.
- Improved temperature control in the pellet press conditioner by monitoring meal temperature and outside air conditions. This will be especially useful for cold climates.
- A simplified method of item interlocking when running in manual override.
- A more intelligent method to prevent large motors from overheating, traditionally done by limiting the “number of starts per hour”.
- Improved integration with

new office systems: specifically SAP and “Microsoft Dynamics” using XML.

- Improved accuracy for very fast feeders.

As ever, our development is driven by customer demand so if there is something you would like to see or even if you have some ideas we would love to hear them.

If you would like further information, please contact:- Matthew Swallow (mail@dsl-systems.com)

