

Lubrication Program Enables Simmons Feed to Cut Downtime by 50 Percent



Simmons lubrication team

(Left to right) Tim Newman, Kyle Rubeck and William Hada



The new lubrication room at the Simmons Feed Ingredients plant

The Simmons Feed Ingredients plant in Southwest City, Missouri, produces high-quality animal nutrition for pet food, aquaculture and livestock. Five years ago, the facility was experiencing one equipment failure after another, with some costing in excess of \$200,000. The ensuing reactive maintenance work resulted in parts being ordered for machines that broke down a day earlier and work orders being generated to fix the “Band-Aided” equipment during the next scheduled downtime.

In addition, Simmons needed to correct its inadequate lubricant selection practices and protect its oil storage system from water and other contaminants. The plant did not have an oil analysis program, and its lubrication training and filtration of gear units were deficient.

A Roadmap for Lubrication Excellence

When Simmons decided to put more of an emphasis on lubrication, changes began to be made within the organization. Once the basics were in place, the company chose Noria Corporation for its training and Lubrication Program Development (LPD). Noria’s experts developed a roadmap for lubrication excellence, including precision lube routes, proper oil handling practices and written procedures for each task.

“Noria’s program gave us a detailed plan for what we needed to do,” said Tim Newman, maintenance manager at Simmons Feed Ingredients. “Basically, it outlined our next steps and low-hanging fruit, and told us to go get it — and we went and got it.”

Simmons discovered that it had been using all the wrong types of oil. Recommendations were made for installing filtration units, desiccant breathers and color-coded identification systems for machines and oil transfer containers. A new lube room was also designed to keep oil in a climate-controlled environment.

Obtaining Buy-in

Of course, there was some resistance when the lubrication program was initially implemented. Every member of the first reliability team had to be replaced because of a lack of buy-in and commitment. As the plant’s culture gradually changed, the results proved to anyone who had doubts about the program’s success that the company was on the right course.

“It’s all about the people,” Newman added. “If you can get buy-in from your people, you can make the program succeed. Making them more aware of what’s going on,

Overview

Challenges

- Continuous equipment failures
- Inadequate lubricant selection practices
- A reactive approach to maintenance

Solution

Noria’s Lubrication Program Development (LPD)

Results

- Potential cost savings of \$1 million per year
- 50-percent reduction in downtime
- Culture change

“ ... we believe the **cost savings from the avoidance of lost production and gear failures could be up to **\$1 million a year** ... ”**

– Tim Newman, Maintenance Manager

having them be a part of the team and sending them for training have really helped our culture.”

Training would be essential in the plant’s transformation. Approximately 30 people were sent for training outside the company, with several achieving their Machine Lubrication Technician (MLT) Level I certification from the International Council for Machinery Lubrication (ICML). Currently, more than 60 percent of the maintenance crew receives some type of training every year.

Today, the Simmons plant is able to focus on predictive and proactive maintenance rather than on only reactive work. A typical day at the facility now includes maintenance planning, oil sampling, vibration analysis and laser alignment.

Production and maintenance personnel have begun basic equipment care (BEC) workshops, and all machinery has been given a criticality ranking. The improvements not only have instilled a sense of pride in the Simmons team but also will make a dramatic impact on the company’s bottom line.

“After we get everything implemented with clean oil, we believe the cost savings from the avoidance of lost production and gear failures could be up to \$1 million a year, and that is just in controlling our particle counts,” Newman said. “I can honestly say that our oil program has cut breakdowns by more than 50 percent.”

Continuing the Journey

Simmons’ journey to lubrication excellence continues. The plant has some work to do in upgrading its equipment and getting all of its lubrication routes set up in the computerized maintenance management system (CMMS). While the facility may still experience machine failures, very few are oil related.

“Everything Noria has done so far has helped us in our journey,” Newman noted. “It’s been a great relationship. As we continue to grow, we always want to have someone to partner with us in case we have any questions. That’s what I like about Noria. With everything I ask for, they are usually on it. If they don’t have the information I’m looking for, they can get it fast.”



Oil-dispensing station



Top-up containers and grease gun storage



Oil storage containers

For more on Noria’s Lubrication Program Development, contact us at 800-597-5460 or visit Noria.com.



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