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Press Release

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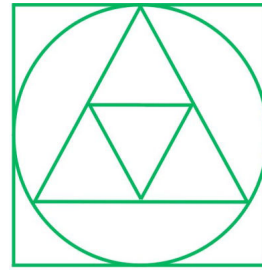
Single point load cells help poultry farmers optimise growth weight of birds

A UK-based provider of control and instrumentation systems for poultry farmers is using single point load cells on portable bird weighing systems and feed hopper systems to help farmers optimise the growth weight of birds with the food they are being fed.

Supermarkets now specify that poultry farmers supply fixed weight-priced birds. If, for example, a poultry farmer is supplying 4-pound oven-ready chickens with a tolerance range of 3.9 to 4.1 pounds to a supermarket, for birds that weight less than 3.9 pounds, the supermarket will deduct monies from the final payment. If the birds are overweight and exceed 4.1 pounds, the farmer is giving away product since there is no extra payment for this additional weight because payment is based on the number of birds supplied.

This means that the load cells used on weighing systems are important in ensuring that accurate weight measurements are made and that bird weight and feed can be optimised accordingly. The load cells often also need to operate in dusty and wet conditions.

CF Whaler Limited, based in Wragby, Lincolnshire, is using two types of single point load cells from Aldermaston-based supplier, Applied Measurements Ltd. CF Whaler designs, manufactures and installs electrical and electronic environmental control systems and equipment for the agricultural industry. The company's product range includes fan speed controllers, lighting equipment and control systems, alarm monitoring systems, feed blender systems, portable bird weighing systems, vent drive motors and linear actuators.



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Applied Measurements has been working with CF Whaler for around 10 years, supplying its OBU Series of single point load cells for use in two CF Whaler products.

CF Whaler's bird weighing system that uses the company's 'STICK' controller enables the poultry farmer to record bird weights automatically by capturing individual weights and calculating an average. The unit is portable and the display/controller can be plugged in to any nearby 13A socket.

The platform is designed in the shape of a tunnel in order to protect the bird being weighed from interference by the surrounding flock. Two separate size restriction plates are provided to further increase the number of valid bird weights by preventing multiple birds perching together. Readings available from the system include 'average weight', 'current average', 'previous 24-hour average', 'number of birds weighed' and 'last bird weight'.

As Mark Thorp, Technical Director at CF Whaler commented: "We selected the OBU series load cells from Applied Measurement because they provide us with the accuracy, long term stability and environmental protection that our weighing systems require – at an excellent price. We also need to respond very quickly to requests from poultry farmer customers who often need weighing units very quickly. Applied Measurements delivers load cells to us often at very short notice, within one week on some occasions."

The STICK bird weighing system uses Applied Measurements' OBUG Series load cell, which is mounted at the bottom of a platform that the birds can perch on, so the environment is harsh. The OBUG is a moment-insensitive, single point load cell, which means only one unit is required centrally positioned to make a weighing system. Before this type of design was introduced to the market, three or four separate load cells would be required to perform the same task.



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Sealed to IP65, the OBU Series is available in capacities from 0.5kg up to 1,000kg. CF Whaler uses the 10kg version on its portable bird weigher. Peter Lewis, Managing Director at Applied Measurements commented: “The OBU Series of load cells were originally intended for industrial and laboratory scale tasks, but they are equally suited to a wide range of force measurement applications. The design of the OBU combined with the volume manufacturing techniques used to build this series of load cells makes it an ideal solution for applications in which low forces are to be measured within a tight budget.”

The OBU Series is a robust, high accuracy load cell that can be sealed to IP67 (IP65 is standard) for damp and wet conditions. Extra mechanical protection can be provided by adding overload stops. The load cells are constructed from anodised aluminium alloy (stainless steel versions are also available) providing a lightweight unit. The load cells can also be supplied calibrated as a complete system with any of Applied Measurements’ instrumentation products.

CF Whaler also uses load cells from Applied Measurements on its STICK feed hopper/blender systems. The larger, OBUC-100 single point load cell is mounted across the top of the feed hopper, with the feed weigher suspended from the load cell. The OBUC-100 has a capacity of 100kg and is provided with sense wires for compensation of voltage drops along the load cell cable. The feed hopper system enables the farmer to make adjustments to the mix of the bird feed using a simple joystick controller. Both the STICK portable bird weigher and STICK feed hopper have a load cell amplifier mounted to the side of the equipment, which is connected to a remote computer with digital display and joystick controller.

For more information on the OBU Series of single point load cells, please call the Applied Measurements sales department on 0118 981 7339 or email: info@appmeas.co.uk



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Note to Editors: Applied Measurements Limited (www.appmeas.co.uk) offers a comprehensive selection of transducers based on strain gauge technology. The company's product range includes sensors to measure load, pressure, torque and displacement. In addition, a custom transducer design service and strain gauge bonding facilities are available.

To support the transducer range, a variety of analogue and digital instrumentation is available, including high resolution, high speed and RS232/485 equipped signal conditioners and indicators, as well as portable battery powered indicators with integral data logging, enabling the company to offer complete systems with calibration traceable to UKAS standards.

In addition to the standard transducer range, the company also has the capability to design, develop and manufacture custom devices to meet specific needs. Expertise is based on bonded strain gauge technology, which is carried across the company's complete line of transducers. Involvement in customer projects can be at any stage, from development and design, through prototyping, testing and into full production.

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