Kistler-Morse®

Sonologic Products

case history

Market: Processing of Clay Slurries

CUSTOMER

JM Huber's manufacturing facility at the Clay Division's headquarters in Macon, GA. The company primarily supplies kaolin clay for the paper industry, as well as paint, rubber, plastics and pharmaceutical customers.

PROBLEM

Previously, the facility had used differential pressure cells on the bottom of clay slurry tanks to monitor product inventory. However, that method became unsatisfactory, says Fred Thomas, Engineering Manager at the plant. "As processing standards were tightened and the need for better inventory control increased, they (DP cells) became inadequate," Thomas says. "We found that as the material in the tanks changed specific gravity, we'd get erroneous readings. We process a slurry material, and as the percent solids of the material changes, that changes the specific gravity of the slurry. The readings really became a function of the percent solids of the material, rather than the material in the tank."

APPLICATION

Over the course of 5 years, the facility installed Kistler-Morse Sonologic level transducers for over 50 storage and process tanks -- ranging in size from 6-feet tall by six-feet wide to 32-feet tall by 30-feet wide. JM Huber also decided to experiment with K-M's Multi-Vessel System software for monitoring more than one tank at a time.

BENEFIT

With the old differential pressure cells, Thomas estimates that he was getting accuracy of 5 to 10% of true product in the tank. With the new system from Kistler-Morse, he estimates the accuracy has improved to between 2 to 3%. "Our company has pushed for improved quality control as well as improved inventory control," Thomas says. "So the improved accuracy helps us achieve that goal." Thomas also added that he encountered some early difficulties with the first Sonologic units he purchased. "Kistler-Morse recognized that they had a problem with one batch of units, and we exchanged them for new ones. They have a good customer service policy, which I appreciate. Not all vendors are like that. The new ones have worked fine since we switched them."

CONCLUSION

In addition to the Sonologic hardware, Thomas says he's pleased with the Multi-Vessel System software. "Before, everything had been single point monitoring. We presently have 10 or 12 tanks on the MVS. We'll be progressively expanding units into the Multi Vessel System. It's cheaper by about $500 per monitoring point, and it allows us to have distributed control for everything in the tank farm."

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