



# Feed Management Systems Customer Case Study



New York state premix mill uses the Feed Mill Manager™ solution to keep up with continuous annual growth without increasing staff.

## Overview

### Customer Profile

Mercer Milling Company, Inc. began over two generations ago in Baldwinsville, New York as a water-driven flour mill. Currently operating from a fully-automated manufacturing plant based in Liverpool, New York, Mercer Milling supplies the feed industry with premium vitamin and trace mineral premixes, as well as a full line of feed additives and specialty products.

### Situation

Mercer Milling moved to their new location in Liverpool and have been experiencing continuous growth each year since. With that growth, they needed to increase their efficiency with the existing staff. Their batching, formulation systems and current accounting did not provide strong enough data integration, they needed to minimize errors between those systems. Mercer Milling also needed to automate their pricing, get a handle on inventory management and ensure lot traceability.

**“With Feed Mill Manager we’ve been able to run more efficiently, provide better customer service, and maintain better inventory control”**

Rene L. Lavoie II  
General Manager  
Mercer Milling Company, Inc.

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### Situation

When Mercer Milling moved to its new location in Liverpool, they implemented a state-of-the-art fully automated manufacturing facility based around a WEM4000 batching system. They were using QuickBooks for accounting, and **Feed Management Systems’ Brill Formulation™** software to create formulas.

“When we moved to our new facility, we began to experience tremendous growth,” explains Rene L. Lavoie II, General Manager. “We have been growing continuously each year since 2003, and with that growth we needed to look at increasing our efficiency while keeping our existing staff.”

One way they saw to do that was on the data side. “We had our batching, our accounting, and our formulation, but they didn’t talk to each other, other than a manual export from the **Brill Formulation** system to the WEM4000 system,” continues Rene. “I wanted to create efficiencies, and minimize errors, between those systems.”

In addition to the efficiency gains, they were looking for new features. “Our pricing was completely manual, we had no inventory management whatsoever, and no record of low flow or lot traceability,” says Rene.

### Solution

To meet their goals, Mercer Milling looked to **Feed Management Systems**, and decided in the spring of 2006 to add the **Feed Mill Manager** solution, including many of the optional modules, to their system. Once they made the decision to purchase, the process went very quickly.

“We assigned each person an individual area of expertise,” explains Rene. “Everybody became an expert in their area.” They worked with **FMS** to help manage transition deadlines, and also had one or two active training sessions each week for eight weeks before their implementation deadline.

They began setting up all their customer, vendor, item, and pricing records that summer, and by October, 2006, they were ready.



**Feed Management  
Systems**

## Overview

### Solution

Mercer Milling implemented **Feed Mill Manager** to integrate their data and processes, manage inventory and traceability, along with the Advanced Costing and Advanced Pricing modules for complete control. They also implemented **Microsoft Dynamics GP** for their accounting, providing better management tools and ease of use for their staff.

### Benefits

- Ability to manage growth with existing staff for efficiency
- Common Microsoft technology platform for ease of use
- Lot traceability control and compliance reporting
- Fewer errors
- Easy and accurate pricing for customer satisfaction
- Better inventory management increases margins
- Fully integrated real-time system

## Solution (continued)

“We simply shut off our old accounting system at the end of October,” explains Rene, “and turned on the **Feed Mill Manager** system on November 1<sup>st</sup>.” Since they had no live integration, they did not run any parallel systems.

“The team from **FMS** was great,” says Rene. “They were here whenever we needed them.” **FMS** sent a consultant to be onsite for the go-live date, and continued with online support and web-based training as questions arose.

The implementation process went as planned. The biggest challenge for Mercer Milling was mindset. “Figuring out what to change was easy,” explains Rene. “Changing how we do things was the most difficult. You have to accept and be willing to change the way you do business. Everything is integrated, real-time—it’s a huge benefit, but it’s a different way of thinking.”

### Benefits

#### Internal resources

Mercer Milling has met one of their key goals by implementing the **Feed Mill Manager** solution. “We’ve been able to keep up with our growth, without having to keep adding staff,” says Rene. And when they do need to bring people on, the common platform makes that process easier as well. When faced with the need to bring someone on to help run the accounting software, they did not need to look for someone who knew an industry-specific program. “We just looked for someone with experience in Microsoft Dynamics GP™; we got someone in, and they were able to pick it up right away—it was a real breath of fresh air,” explains Rene.

#### Lot traceability

Mercer Milling viewed the FDA compliance aspect of lot traceability as a side benefit, but it has turned out to be key benefit. Recently, Mercer Milling received an FDA order to provide raw material lot numbers on a customer premix order. “When I learned about the FDA order, I had the same reaction as most mill managers would – I panicked,” says Rene. “I began what I thought would be a laborious process of tracing lot numbers, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that within ten minutes, I had the information I needed due to our new system.”

#### Accurate internal audits

The **Feed Mill Manager** system provides Mercer Milling with all the information they need to perform internal audits more quickly and efficiently. “We have a built-in, double-check system,” explains Rene. “We have the **Feed Mill Manager** information, plus the WEM batching information. We can match up those two files to ensure we have no errors.”

“We know exactly what we have. We can turn our inventory faster, and we save money because we only order when we need product, rather than when we think we need product.”

Rene L. Lavoie II  
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## Benefits (continued)

### Easier, more accurate pricing ensures customer satisfaction

Before implementing the **Feed Mill Manager** system, all pricing was done manually. Now, 80% of pricing is pre-set. “We still have a ways to go,” says Rene. “We’re still building pricing databases for about 20% of our customers. But even so, with Advanced Costing and Advanced Pricing we’re seeing an extraordinary amount of time savings.” In addition, pre-defined pricing takes the guesswork out of the process for their customer service representatives, which means better and faster customer service.

### Better inventory control

The Inventory Control functionality within the **Feed Mill Manager** solution saves Mercer Milling hours of physical count work, and provides for much better inventory control. “We know exactly what we have,” says Rene. “We can turn our inventory faster, and we save money because we only order when we need product, rather than when we think we need product.”

## What’s next?

Mercer Milling continues to look to **Feed Management Systems** to increase their effectiveness. They are currently evaluating the warehouse module, which will enable barcode support. “We want to be 100% up and running first,” says Rene. “We’re very close; we’re looking at another year or so.”

### For More Information

For more information about **Feed Management Systems** products and services, call 763-560-8139, email [info@feedsys.com](mailto:info@feedsys.com), or go to [www.feedsys.com](http://www.feedsys.com).

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