

Storage Capacity Doubled

ILLINOIS GRAIN MERCHANT BOOSTS TRAIN-LOADING CAPABILITIES



Littlejohn Grain Co.
Martinsville, IL • 217-382-4158

Founded: 1930
Storage capacity: 3.5 million bushels at five locations
Annual volume: 8 million bushels
Annual sales: \$20 million
Number of employees: 15-16
Crops handled: Corn, soybeans, soft red winter wheat, sorghum
Services: Grain handling and merchandising, trading

Key personnel:

- Brad Kusterman, general manager
- Cathy Redman, office manager
- Randy Black, superintendent

Supplier List

Aeration fans Alanco Environmental Mfg.
Aeration system .. Decatur Aeration
Catwalk Brownie Systems
Concrete tank builder ... Hoffmann Inc.
Conveyors HSI Systems
Engineering Michael Welsh PE
Equipment procurement ... Cleveland Grain Systems
Grain temperature system ... The Rolfes Co.
Millwright In-house
Speed reducers Dodge
Tower support system In-house



Littlejohn Grain Co.'s 1.335-million-bushel elevator east of Martinsville, IL, with two new 380,000-bushel jumpform concrete tanks at either end of the facility. Aerial photo by B&M Studio of Photography, Pekin, IL.

Back in 1996, privately-owned Littlejohn Grain Co. built a 575,000-bushel rail-loading elevator about a mile east of its headquarters in Martinsville, IL (covered in the March/April 1997 issue of *Grain Journal*).

At the time, General Manager Brad Kusterman said the reason for building a new elevator was to load unit trains on a Conrail main line (now CSX), noting that the company's headquarters facility in downtown Martinsville was surrounded by residential property and had no room to expand.

Five years later, the Martinsville East elevator needed some more expansion itself.

"We could load a 65-car unit train out of Martinsville east," Kusterman says, "but then it would take three or four weeks to recharge the elevator and gather enough bushels to load

another train. The market gives you opportunities to market grain profitably, but we couldn't always take advantage of them."

In 2001, the company added two more jumpform concrete storage tanks at Martinsville East. The tanks hold 380,000 bushels each, bringing total storage capacity to the facility on U.S. Highway 40 to 1.335 million bushels.

"Now, we can load three or four 65-car trains back to back, if we need to," says Kusterman. "We can load a unit train in seven hours."

Storage Expansion

Littlejohn Grain hired Cleveland Grain Systems, Decatur, IL (217-865-2603) to procure the equipment needed for the \$1 million project. "I've known (owner) Harold Cleveland for years, and he's very knowledge-



Brad Kusterman



New 12,000-bph HSI drag conveyor carries grain out to the new west-end storage tank. Photo by Ed Zdrojewski.

able and helpful in coming up with creative design ideas,” Kusterman says.

To build the concrete tanks, the

company selected Hoffmann Inc., Muscatine, IA (563-263-4733). “It was the first time we’ve used them, and they did a very good job,” the general manager comments.

Michael Welsh PE, Morton, IL (309-266-5461) performed the structural engineering on the project. Littlejohn Grain did its own millwright work in-house – employees Ron Sherwood and Don Padrick did the lion’s share of the work.

Construction began around April 1, 2001. The first tank was completed around the beginning of August, and the second was done by late September.

The Facts and Figures

The two new 380,000-bushel tanks, standing at the east and west ends of the facility, stand 66 feet in diameter and 132 feet tall. The flat-bottom tanks currently have no sweep augers, but there are plans to install them this year. They also have 11-cable Rolfes grain temperature monitoring systems.

A pair of Alanco 50-hp centrifugal fans supply 1/9 cfm per bushel of air through in-floor gratings in an H-pattern.

The existing 12,000-bph receiving leg and distributor can deliver incoming grain to two new 12,000-bph HSI drag conveyors running out to the new tanks. Another set of above-ground, 12,000-bph HSI drag conveyors reclaim grain from the new tanks.

The Martinsville East facility utilizes gravity sidedraws for loading unit trains and generates origin weights through the use of a pair of Fairbanks track scales.

“Our current plans are to move our headquarters office from downtown Martinsville out to the Martinsville East elevator,” says Kusterman. “We also plan to add a temporary storage pile, another truck receiving pit, and another leg. This new facility gets the grain truck traffic out of town, with plenty of access from Highway 40 and good county cross roads.”

Ed Zdrojewski, editor

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