White Oak Mills

A 24/6 feed mill upgraded its control system over a weekend and was running Monday morning.

CUSTOMER

White Oak Mills
Elizabethtown,
Lancaster County, PA

INDUSTRY

Commercial feed manufacturing — dairy, swine, poultry, beef

PROJECT

Full control system upgrade to WEM 6000, including batching and pelleting

CUTOVER

April 2026



AT A GLANCE

+3.3%

Output increase vs. prior upgrade

1 WEEKEND

Total downtime for the full cutover

6 DAYS

Until operators ran the mill independently

2 WEEKS

To pre-upgrade production — climbing since



THE MILL

White Oak Mills has served the agribusiness community of Pennsylvania and northern Maryland since 1976, when brothers John and Mark Wagner purchased a small feed mill near Manheim, PA. Today the family-owned company runs a modern manufacturing facility in Elizabethtown producing complete feeds, concentrates, and mineral mixes for dairy, swine, poultry, and beef producers. White Oak has continually reinvested in the facility — ingredient bins, corn receiving, pellet mills, and the automation platform.

THE CHALLENGE

White Oak's WEM control system had run the mill dependably for years. But the team wanted more from its automation — clearer screens, deeper diagnostics, better data and decided to move to WEM 6000, built on Ignition. The risk in any upgrade isn't the new system. It's the cutover. A botched transition at a 24/6 mill doesn't just cost days of production it costs customer deliveries. For White Oak, the WEM 6000 upgrade path meant choosing a partner that already knew the mill, and a transition that could be designed rather than improvised.

THE APPROACH

Map, build, and test before install.

Every I/O point, device, and control sequence was mapped into WEM 6000 and tested in advance. Reports were rebuilt across working sessions with White Oak's team, to match how the mill actually used the information — not just what the old system happened to print.

Weekend cutover with a dedicated team.

The physical installation and switchover were compressed into a single weekend, with a focused team of WEM specialists on site through the install and the stabilization period that followed. I/O checkout was fast because WEM 6000's HMI screens make it easy to see everything in one place.

THE RESULTS

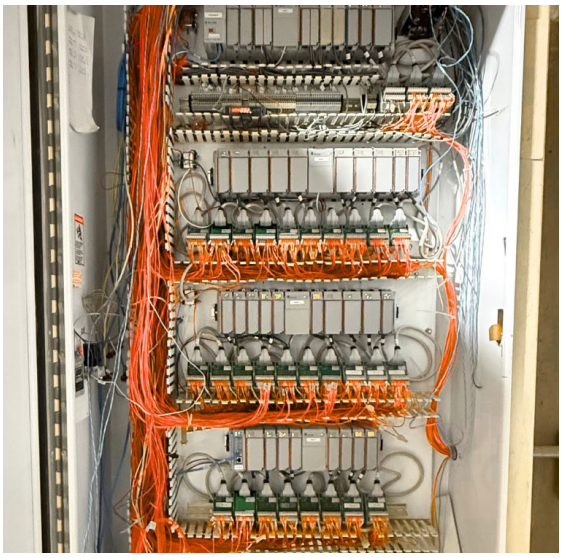
+3.3% tons per hour

Verification without drama.
Because every point was mapped, labeled, and tested before install weekend, I/O checkout went exactly as documented no wire-chasing and no schedule slip.

Full production within two weeks — and climbing since.
White Oak was back at full pre-upgrade production within two weeks of cutover, and throughput has continued to improve as operators put the new system's capabilities to work. +3.3% tons per hour was achieved versus the same time during the last upgrade.

Operators independent within days.
Rather than a months-long learning curve, White Oak's operators were running the mill independently within days of go-live — a direct payoff of building the new system around how the mill already worked.





Pellet mills, from manual to automatic.
Before the upgrade, White Oak's operators ran the pellet mills by hand — watching amps, working the feeder, relying on years of feel. Today the mills run automatically, ramps and recovery included. The hardest part of any automation project isn't the software; it's earning trust.

Troubleshooting the team can do themselves.
WEM 6000's clearer screens and built-in diagnostics give the mill's staff the information they need to identify and resolve issues that might have previously required a phone call. That means faster troubleshooting, less downtime, and greater control for the maintenance team — keeping the mill running with fewer outside interruptions..

"WEM 6000 is without a doubt the best system we have ever seen. From a maintenance standpoint and user-friendly perspective, it can't be beat."

Keith Beach, Hawthorne Electric, Installing Electrician

WHY IT WORKED

Feed mill control upgrades fail in the gap between the engineering and the mill floor. WEM closed that gap by starting from years of familiarity with the mill, studying how White Oak actually ran before building anything, testing fully before install weekend, and staying on site until the mill stabilized . For mills selecting a WEM system today: this is what the install path looks like.

> "The screens just make sense. When something's not right, I can see where and why without digging through half a dozen menus — my guys handle most of it themselves now. And the WEM crew knew their stuff and stuck with us the whole way. You call, somebody answers. That counts for a lot around here."
>
> **Mat Mountain, Maintenance Manager,** White Oak Mills



CONSIDERING A CONTROL SYSTEM UPGRADE?

Talk to us about what a low-risk cutover looks like for your mill

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