



CUSTOM MANUFACTURING SINCE 1946



ADD TIME BACK TO YOUR DAY

Efficiency in Feed Transportation

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Ledwell has been serving the poultry industry for decades. After Buddy Ledwell and his father opened Ledwell & Son Lumber in 1946, they started building pickup racks and livestock trailers on the side. That sideline quickly became the focus of the company.

We built our first steel bulk feed body in the late 1950s. A couple of decades later, we started manufacturing aluminum feed equipment, and we've even built a few chicken hauler trailers along the way.

Over the years, we've learned a lot about what works in this industry. In this book, you'll find some of the top tips we've picked up along the way.

Adding a few of these practices or equipment features can help you work safer and more efficiently. That means more time back in your day. Inside, you'll find information on technology, delivery systems, hydraulics, safety, and service. If you have any questions, reach out using the contact info below.

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TECHNOLOGY

In recent years, technology in automated unloading systems has allowed operators to reduce unloading times and be more attentive to their surroundings while minimizing human error while unloading. An automated system maximizes efficiency and allows the trailer to run at peak performance. You aren't relying on the driver/operator to adjust the floor to keep the pressure where it needs to be.

Most variations of an automated system are measuring pressure in the hydraulic circuit and making adjustments to the hydraulic flow, keeping the system running at optimal potential throughout the entire unloading process without the operators need to make these adjustments manually. This allows the operator to step away from their valves and gauges to be more attentive to their surroundings, open bottom floor gates, or watch a feed bin while unloading.

By continuously monitoring and maintaining the hydraulic circuit to run at maximum potential, you will see improved unload times, reduce the chances of plugging up the system, and extend the life of all hydraulic components.



A benefit of Ledwell's automated system is that it is easily retrofittable to any existing trailer.

DELIVERY SYSTEM

The two most common floor delivery systems in the market place are the auger and drag chain systems.

Over the years, the drag chain floor has proven to be extremely dependable and less maintenance, over time, than an auger floor. The chain and crossbar design of a floor chain simply outlast the



flighting of an auger screw. In the event that the chain or sprockets need to be replaced or repaired, the repairs are typically quicker and easier to access than a floor auger and bearing system. This results in less downtime for maintenance and repairs.

The 5:1 Gear ratio used to drive the drag chain floor provides exceptional torque for unloading the heaviest of feeds and the depth of the chain pan allows for more volume of feed to be carried to the rear, in comparison with an auger floor, resulting in a higher rate of offloading. Pit dumping with a drag chain is easily achieved by shutting off the discharge leg of the hydraulic system and unloading from the rear of the trailer.

When pellet quality counts, the drag chain floor is the answer. Studies show that a drag chain floor reduced the destruction of pellets through the unloading process by over 60% in side-by-side comparisons to two other auger floors. This can play a huge factor in feed conversion rate with poultry.

Ledwell's drag chain floor features flat rack and pinion bottom doors that allow for virtually 100% cleanout and no residual feed left after unloading, which may otherwise require downtime for flushing between loads or products.

HYDRAULICS

Traditional wet kits required a large volume hydraulic oil reservoir to run a feed trailer, typically 60 gallons or more. This volume was required due to heat buildup during the unloading process of the



feed trailer. The added weight of such a large volume of hydraulic oil makes a direct impact on the amount of payload you could haul in each load.

With today's advancements in hydraulic oil coolers, you are able to operate with a much smaller oil reservoir, around 10 gallons, while more effectively controlling the oil temperature. This can result in 400-pound weight savings that translate directly to the added payload in each load, greatly affecting your bottom line over the life of your equipment.

There are several other advantages of reduced volume. With less oil, it takes less time to bring the oil up to operating temperature in cold weather. This reduces the time required once you reach your delivery destination and gets you back to reload quicker.

These oil coolers directly affect your bottom line and are also more environmentally friendly. For example, you could completely drain and replace a 10-gallon system six times more often for the same cost as replacing your fluid one time in a 60-gallon tank. This keeps better oil in the system throughout this duration, extending the life of all hydraulic components it is running through. In the event of an oil spill, you are potentially losing six times less oil to clean up and replace.

SAFETY

Times have changed since we first started building feed trailers. Working smart and efficiently also means being safe. Here are a few features we think are important to implement to enhance safety.

If you have access to the top of the trailer via a ladder, we strongly recommend a catwalk system that incorporates a handrail and/or a tram. With these safety features in place, it makes it much safer when access is needed on top of the trailer. For Ledwell, we have made that a standard feature on all our trailers unless otherwise requested by our customers.

There are also disabling devices and alarms available to notify an operator and/or prevent them from moving their trailer when their boom is not saddled. This can be as simple as an amber strobe light and audible alarm in the cab to a device that disables the tractor from moving without the PTO disengaged and boom in the saddle.

Those of you who have been in the industry for a while understand the shoulder fatigue involved

Hand rails for added safety



with opening and closing bottom floor gates day in and day out. To combat that, Ledwell offers Air-Operated Doors that allow the operator to open and close floor gates with the flip of a switch or the push of a button on their wireless remote. Not only does this greatly reduce shoulder fatigue, but it also allows the operator to stand at their controls and monitor their gauges without having to go back and forth opening gates. Pressure gauges can clearly indicate when a bin is near empty and it's time to push a button and open the next gate.

Incorporating an on-board bio-security system will save the operator time and energy by not requiring them to get out and spray down your equipment manually. This option allows the operator to disinfect their equipment with the flip of a switch in the cab before leaving a farm. Spray points strategically located around the tractor and trailer provide direct application of disinfectant agent via



an onboard pump and reservoir, typically located on the front fender of the feed trailer. This is common practice to minimize the chances of cross-contamination between farm to farm.

Stability and center of gravity is another factor to consider when spec'ing your next bulk feed unit. Anti-Lock Braking Systems and Roll Stability Support is a standard feature on any new Ledwell feed trailer. This helps mitigate the loss of control and roll-over situations. Taking stability a step further, we also offer a drop-deck keel design in our bulk trailers that have successfully lowered the center of gravity of the load by up to 30%.



SERVICE

Lastly, the last tip to improve efficiency is often not considered on the front end of a purchase decision, but can quickly become a major factor in the productivity of your delivery program. Service and parts availability after the sale.

Before purchasing equipment there are a few questions you should ask your potential supplier. Ask about parts availability, same-day shipping availability, service, and support after the sale. Ask for references or ask others in the industry for their experience.

Downtime can be extremely costly, and in many situations, you simply can't wait days or weeks for parts. Same-day shipping on most parts is something Ledwell prides itself in and known for in the industry.

QUESTIONS? GET IN TOUCH

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