

CASE STUDY



CARLISLE
Technology

Symphony's Harvest Solution for Small Abattoir Processing Facilities



How a small abattoir enhanced their service offering by adopting modern traceability technology and accurate yield reporting to better serve their local farmer-partners.

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“T&E Meats is small multi-species plant working primarily as a co-packer under USDA inspection. We had long dreamt of upgrading our plant scale/label systems to be able to capture the power of data and full product traceability for our many customers. As we researched our options, Carlisle emerged as the best combination of plant floor flexibility and durability, combined with full database capability. Of the small plant systems we considered, we felt that the Carlisle Symphony system gave us the most immediately adoptable solution which also had the greatest long-term upside, in terms of future expansion. This was important, as we knew we would have to gradually grow into all of the vast capabilities.”

Joe Cloud
Managing Partner
T&E Meats

► The Challenge:

T&E Meats approached Carlisle Technology because their farmer-partners were struggling with two basic problems:

- lack of up-to-date labeling with traceability technology
- low profit margins combined with lack of knowledge regarding production efficiencies

The goal of the project was to improve T&E Meats' ability to give their customers access to modern traceability technology and accurate yield reporting.

► The Solution:

There are many different pieces to the solution. The first piece provided was a harvest floor station to start the traceability process and to capture animal live weights and hot weights. This information is being used in the yield reporting. Next, were two cut floor stations to weigh and label individual pieces and cartons produced from the carcass. The third piece of the solution is the shipping portion and the QuickBooks® interface. Symphony has the capability to send order information to QuickBooks® where T&E finalize their orders.

► The Results:

T&E Meats can now provide their farmer-partners fully labeled and barcoded product. Branded products can now be tracked from the piece all the way back to the original carcass. This level of traceability will create new opportunities for their farmer-partners to sell their products to larger food retailers and distributors. T&E Meats is also able to provide real visibility into carcass yields. Carcass yields can be viewed by the carcass tag identification number. T&E Meats can see how many serialized pieces and cartons, by quantity or weight, were produced from each carcass.



SYMPHONY is Carlisle Technology's plant productivity and traceability software suite. With a modular design, Symphony was built to expand as a customer's needs grow. Control plant floor production by managing product files, label formats, and product tare weights. Collect Data from the plant floor and get insight into production, productivity, and traceability. Streamline shipping, receiving and order picking with Symphony's Warehouse Management System. Symphony combines rugged plant-floor data collection (MES) with fast and reliable warehouse management software to give users a 360-degree view of their entire operation.



"I really appreciate the robustness of the Carlisle platform. A slaughter and processing plant is a very harsh environment. Given the moisture and humidity levels, heavy use of cleansers and sanitizers, and general physical activity, equipment really takes a beating. The level of thought that Carlisle has put into manufacturing the system hardware - heavy stainless steel fixtures, water-resistant printer cabinets and touch screen monitors, and wireless fixtures – consistently helps minimize production downtime, which makes an operations guy smile! And the mobile wireless workstations allow us to quickly rearrange floor space on the fly as needed."

Travis Miller
Operations Manager
T&E Meats

Industry

Abattoir and Processing

Employees

Approx. 20-25

Product

Custom Kill / Private Label

Headquarters

Harrisonburg, VA

T&E Meats is in the health business: creating healthy customers, healthy regional farmers, healthy workers, and a healthy food community by connecting local farmers to local eaters, retaining food dollars in our local communities, providing a safe, healthy, and affordable food supply, and healing the earth by promoting ecologically sound farming practices.

T&E is recognized around the state as a unique resource in the local food community, working with Virginia farmers to promote the availability of a healthy grass-based red meat supply, while at the same time educating and providing customers with the highest quality professional processing and packing services.



The Challenge:

What issue or pain point needed to be addressed?

T&E Meats approached Carlisle Technology because their farmer-partners were struggling with two basic problems. Their problems included:

- lack of modern packaging with traceability technology
- lack of knowledge regarding production efficiencies

The goal of the project was to improve T&E Meats' service offerings by providing them a complete plant traceability system with detailed yield reporting.

Why did they have this problem?

The small meat plant industry, in general, is slow to adopt new technology. There are many reasons for this, but in order to accomplish T&E's goals they needed to implement modern plant technology. Cost can also be a factor for small processors. Modern packaging and traceability systems are expensive and can require extensive training which prohibited T&E Meats from being able to make this investment prior to receiving a grant from the USDA.



What were the client's expected outcomes from working with a vendor?

T&E Meats had two expected outcomes from this project. First, by taking on this new system T&E Meats had a goal of providing their customers the level of traceability required by large food retailers and distributors. The strength of the 'local food movement' is causing large food retailers to approach local farmers about carrying their products. However,

these large retailers have strict traceability requirements that can create a barrier between the local farmers/producers and the food retailers. T&E Meats' goal of breaching that barrier and providing an avenue for their customers to access those large retail opportunities was made possible by adopting Carlisle's Symphony Plant Software. Secondly, in order to give their customers a better understanding of their production costs and efficiencies, T&E Meats also wanted to provide better yield reporting to their customers.

Why did they engage Carlisle Technology to help?

T&E Meats decided to engage Carlisle Technology for three main reasons:

- **Solution:** Carlisle Technology's robust plant-floor solution that has been designed to operate in the harshest conditions.
- **Experience:** Carlisle Technology has been serving the food industry for 30+ years. T&E Meats liked Carlisle's level of experience, plant knowledge, and willingness to serve the small plant community.
- **Affordability:** Thanks to a grant from the USDA, T&E Meats was able to offset a large portion of the system cost.

The Solution:

How did Carlisle Technology approach the challenge?

Carlisle Technology's Symphony system was designed to bring traceability and productivity into processing facilities of all sizes. Every customer is unique, so Carlisle tackles each project differently. Carlisle Technology went onsite to fully document T&E Meats' production process. T&E's processes had to be analyzed against Symphony's current process flow to identify gaps in the product. Carlisle then proposed a modified version of Symphony that would accommodate T&E Meats' needs.

How was the client involved in this stage?

Projects of this magnitude always involve the client's project champion from the very beginning. Before the project started the team at T&E Meats walked Carlisle Technology through every step of their process helping document and point out key areas of concern. Even though T&E Meats is considered a small processor they have one of the most complex

operations we had ever worked with. Their operation consists of:

- Multi-species processing (all red meat & three exotic species)
- Able to do Custom cutting, wrapping and private labeling for each customer
- Value add processing

Once the project started T&E Meats worked with our project team to create a project timeline with key deliverables. T&E was also key in reviewing all the Symphony modifications to approve them prior to the final delivery of the system.

What was the solution?

T&E Meats purchased a modified version of Symphony. The out-of-the-box Symphony solution builds inventory through production, and that inventory is relieved through product sales and shipments. The biggest difference is that T&E Meats doesn't own or sell any products. Their business model is to sell their abattoir, cutting, packaging and value-added processing services. Carlisle Technology modified the standard Symphony solution to fit their business model. There were three key solution components:

1. **Kill Floor:** T&E Meats receives animals directly at the barn. At the barn the operator selects or inputs all the relevant animal information like producer name, farm name, and animal category. The hot scale/receiving station can record the live weight of the animal and its automated to receive the hot weight directly from the hot scale indicator. Once the animal carcass is ready to enter the cooler it is labeled with a carcass tag that is produced by the hot scale/receiving station. In the office the Symphony user designates whether the carcasses will be processed as branded product or locker product.
2. **Cut Floor:** Once a carcass has been tagged and placed in the cooler it can be scanned out of the cooler and sent to the cut floor. T&E Meats produces two types of products, branded product and locker product. Branded product is cut and packaged with each piece being labeled with a standard GS1 barcode and their customer's logo and company information.

Locker product is cut and placed into a mixed product box. That box is weighed and gets a generic "locker product" label. Symphony produces a detailed yield report for T&E Meats that shows the complete breakdown of each carcass from the live weight to the hot weight and down to each individual piece that was weighed and associated to the carcass.

3. **Shipping/QuickBooks® Interface:** After products have been weighed and labeled, they are placed into inventory and are ready for shipping. Symphony has the capability to send order information to QuickBooks® for T&E Meats to complete the order and invoice. Whether a customer comes to pick up their product or the product is shipped T&E Meats can pull up the order on the shipping mobile computer and pick items to fill the order.

What was the timeline?

The project was officially started in mid-March 2018 and was wrapped up by mid-December 2018. Extensive training and support followed through the 1st quarter of 2019, gradually lessening in intensity.



The Results:

Did the solution solve the client's stated problem?

Yes! T&E Meats is now able to provide their farmer-partners fully labeled and barcoded product. Branded products can now be tracked from the piece all the way back to the original carcass. This level of traceability will create new opportunities for their

farmer-partners to sell their products to larger food retailers and distributors.

T&E Meats is also able to provide real visibility into carcass yields. Carcass yields can be viewed by the carcass tag identification number. T&E Meats can see how many serialized pieces and cartons, by quantity or weight, were produced from each carcass. This information is vital for T&E's farmer-partners.

What immediate benefits did the client see because of the solution?

T&E Meats has a full traceability system and can weigh, label and track products for their customers. They now have accurate yield reporting to show their customers exactly how much was produced from each carcass. These benefits should have a positive impact on T&E Meats' business immediately.

What benefits should your client see because of your work over time?

Over time T&E Meats will become more familiar with the system and expand their usage of it. Symphony is a modular software built to expand as T&E's needs expand. T&E Meats can eventually expand their system to include modules like the Process and Recipe Management module, or the Advanced Costing module. Symphony is flexible to grow in the whichever direction T&E decides to grow.

“Carlisle’s customer responsiveness has been outstanding. It is one positive aspect of our relationship that I have to say I was not expecting, especially across an international border. Whenever we have needed help, we have contacted either our technical lead or Carlisle’s Software Response Center and always gotten immediate support. Their technicians’ ability to get inside our system from a thousand miles away and virtually see every appliance in real time as a part of the troubleshooting and diagnostics process has been really eye-opening. They stay with you until the problem is resolved.”

*Joe Cloud
Managing Partner
T&E Meats*



About Carlisle:

Carlisle Technology has specialized in plant-floor hardware and software solutions for over 30 years. Our systems have been implemented in food processing plants of all sizes across North America. The breadth of our solutions vary from small static weighing systems, to complex in-motion weighing labeling and sortation systems. Carlisle Technology's Symphony software is a robust and reliable Manufacturing Execution and Warehouse Management system that provides 360 degree visibility into your plant-floor production and warehouse inventory. Not only does Carlisle provide industry proven solutions; we also help maintain the systems that we sell with our expert hardware and software support teams.



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