

Achieving Multi-Site Wastewater Visibility and Safeguarding Compliance

When a violation goes public, how do you make sure it never happens again?

A major dairy manufacturer operates 60 facilities across North America. Wastewater compliance wasn't just a regulatory checkbox; it was a reputational risk. When a highly publicized discharge violation struck one of its sites, leadership faced a sobering reality: they hadn't seen it coming, and they had no way to see the next one coming either.

The problem wasn't negligence. It was a system built on isolation; spreadsheets, manual updates, and data that lived at the department and plant level and never made it to the people who needed it most.

The Challenge: Flying Blind Across 60 Sites

Each of the organization's 60 facilities managed wastewater data independently. Operators logged measurements into isolated Excel spreadsheets, updating them manually once a month. There was no way for regional leaders or the corporate environmental team to see what was happening at any given plant, let alone across all of them.

The consequences were predictable in hindsight:

- Compliance limits were breached before anyone at the corporate level knew a site was approaching them.
- Historical trends were nearly impossible to analyze across sites.
- Data accuracy couldn't be verified without visiting each plant individually.
- A reactive posture replaced the proactive oversight the organization needed.

The compliance violation that made headlines was the breaking point. Leadership knew they needed a fundamental shift: not just better spreadsheets, but a connected system that could surface risks before they became incidents.

The Solution: One Platform, Every Site

After evaluating multiple vendors and requiring the addition of Single Sign-On (SSO) security support, the organization selected Hach WIMS™ as its centralized, cloud-based data management platform.

Implementation began with the three highest-priority biological wastewater plants. The rollout took three and a half months. Key capabilities included:

- Real-time data aggregation for a single source of truth across all connected facilities
- Automated alerting when measurements approached or exceeded regulatory thresholds
- SCADA integration to pull live operational data directly into the platform
- Role-based dashboards tailored for plant operators, regional leaders, and corporate executives
- A familiar Excel-like interface built on a robust managed database, reducing the learning curve

Three internal environmental engineers served as system champions, leading database configuration, facility templates, and local operator training, with no reliance on external IT teams.

What Changed: From Reactive to Ready

The shift from siloed spreadsheets to a unified data management platform changed how the entire organization utilizes wastewater data.

- Plant operators can build graphs, analyze trends, and connect performance changes to production events such as Clean In Place (CIP)/washdown cycles, changeovers, and coproduct handling without working across multiple spreadsheets.
- Regional leaders and the VP of Environmental Operations have a single dashboard view across all facilities, making it easier to compare sites and spot repeat drivers like high-strength byproduct/coproduct discharges.
- Automated notifications replace the guesswork: when flow or loading spikes indicate a potential slug load the right people know immediately.
- Everyone from the plant floor to the boardroom works from the same data, tailored to their role, linking wastewater KPIs to operational context like CIP scheduling, washdown frequency, and byproduct/coproduct routing.

“We used to find out about a problem after it became a violation. Now we see it coming and act before it ever gets there.”

VP OF ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONS, FOOD & BEVERAGE PROCESSOR

Why It Worked

The success of the rollout came down to two things: usability and internal ownership.

Because the platform closely resembled tools operators already used, formal training was minimal. The organization’s own wastewater engineers drove the implementation: building templates, configuring databases, and incorporating feedback directly from the field. Standardized corporate templates gave leadership the consistency they needed. Site-specific views gave operators the flexibility they valued.

The result was a system that worked for every stakeholder, because every stakeholder helped shape it.

The Results: Visibility That Protects the Business



18 sites: What started with three successful implementations quickly added 15 additional facilities, with all 60 national locations in scope



Real-time: Monitoring of operating and regulatory limits across every connected facility



Proactive: Automated alerts notify staff before thresholds are breached, not after

The Takeaway

In the food and beverage industry, a single compliance failure can trigger regulatory penalties, media scrutiny, and lasting damage to brand reputation. The margin for error is small, and it’s getting smaller as environmental standards tighten.

What this organization discovered is that compliance isn’t just about meeting limits. It’s about knowing, in real time, how close you are to them, across every site, every day. With Hach WIMSTM, they moved from a posture of reacting to violations to one of preventing them.

Sixty facilities. One source of truth. No more surprises.

Ready to move from fragmented systems to a single source of truth?

Standardize your data, scale your visibility, and give every level of your organization the clarity it needs to act with confidence.

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