



CASE STUDY

Synlait Milk cuts unplanned downtime by 242% and doubles average uptime with Octave Attune EAM

Key facts:

Company: Synlait Milk

Website:
www.synlait.com

Industry:
Food & beverage

Country: New Zealand

Products used:
Octave Attune EAM
(HxGN EAM)

Key benefits:

- 242% reduction in unplanned downtime at a single plant
- 100% average improvement in uptime across all Synlait sites (doubling asset availability)
- 10+ hours saved weekly per site in maintenance planning
- Approximately NZD \$1200 in labour-cost savings per week

A dairy innovator driving global expansion

Synlait Milk is a New Zealand-based dairy manufacturer with three modern processing sites and a workforce of 1,127 employees. Founded to add value to local milk suppliers, the company has grown its annual revenue to an estimated NZD \$916 million through a focus on premium nutrition products. Its Dunsandel, Canterbury headquarters serves as the central hub for end-to-end operations, from milk collection and processing to quality control and global distribution.

Synlait's product portfolio spans infant formula, specialty milk powders and cultured dairy ingredients. These offerings are shipped to customers across Asia, Europe, North America and Australasia, supported by a tightly managed cold-chain network. By partnering closely with farmers, Synlait ensures consistent raw-milk quality through on-farm testing and traceability protocols that track each batch from the farm gate through to final shipment.

Rigorous compliance underpins every stage of production. Each site integrates quality-management systems certified to international food-safety standards and digital traceability tools capture every critical control point. This level of oversight not only safeguards consumer health but also strengthens Synlait's reputation for reliability in highly regulated markets. Meanwhile, standardised procedures and real-time monitoring enable rapid response to any deviation, reducing waste and enhancing product consistency.

Innovation sits at the heart of Synlait's strategy. Dedicated research and development teams collaborate with university partners to refine milk-processing techniques and introduce novel formulations. These efforts have delivered breakthroughs in protein concentration and ingredient functionality, opening new markets for advanced nutrition solutions. Synlait also embraces sustainable growth, investing in water-efficiency measures and energy-conservation initiatives that reduce its environmental footprint while driving operational excellence.

Looking ahead, Synlait continues to invest in its people and plant infrastructure to meet rising global demand. Cross-functional teams leverage performance data and continuous improvement methodologies to optimise throughput and uphold the company's high-quality standards. By fusing deep expertise with robust systems and a commitment to sustainability, Synlait Milk maintains its position as a trusted supplier of premium dairy nutrition around the world.

Identifying goals

Synlait Milk's leadership recognised that its maintenance operations relied heavily on spreadsheet-based workflows and disparate Computerised Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS), which limited transparency, delayed responses to emerging equipment issues and increased operational risk.

“Since implementing [Attune EAM], unplanned downtime on Dryer 2 at our Dunsandel facility has plunged by 242% and average uptime has more than doubled — giving us the visibility and confidence to scale our operations globally.”

David Wolfe
Head of assets
& engineering,
Synlait Milk

With rising global demand across Asia, Europe and North America, the company sought to implement Attune EAM as a SaaS solution across its three 24/7 production facilities to provide real-time visibility into asset health and parts inventory. The objectives were to standardise maintenance procedures, eliminate reactive firefighting, reduce unplanned downtime by a quantifiable margin and embed compliance traceability to uphold stringent food-safety requirements without interrupting continuous production.

Overcoming challenges

Deploying Attune EAM across the geographically dispersed sites at Dunsandel, Pokeno and Auckland required meticulous coordination between Synlait and Hexagon teams. Synlait redesigned work-order processes to leverage role-based permissions and digital audit trails, overhauled inventory management and redefined vendor engagement protocols to align with automated workflows. Tailored SQL-driven enhancements were developed to capture each critical control point in infant formula production, ensuring audit readiness.

Comprehensive change management included on-site workshops, pilot testing at Dunsandel and iterative feedback loops. Hexagon’s proactive support model addressed connectivity limitations and resolved technical issues swiftly, keeping the rollout on schedule and maintaining operator’s confidence.

Realising results

Implemented in 2018, Attune EAM started to enhance how Synlait scheduled maintenance. Through Attune EAM, planning and scheduling of reliability-aligned work meant that unplanned downtime began to decline.

Through a Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) process of reviewing Synlait’s assets and how they are maintained, Attune EAM was the forefront of Synlait’s asset management process.

In 2024, one facility recorded a 242% reduction in unplanned downtime and average asset availability more than doubled across all sites. Maintenance-planning cycles contracted by over 10 hours per week at each location, equating to approximately \$1200 NZD in labour savings every week.

Beyond these headline figures, Synlait’s teams gained instant access to a unified repository of maintenance records, purchase orders and audit logs, vastly improving traceability and simplifying compliance reporting. The shift to predictive, data-driven planning has also freed staff to focus on continuous improvement initiatives rather than chasing overdue repairs.

Moving forward

Capitalising on these early wins, Synlait is extending Attune EAM into procurement and financial governance workflows. Automated purchase-order approvals and mandatory receipting now tie every expenditure to specific assets and cost centres, tightening financial controls in real-time. Integration with the Integrated Work System (IWS) delivers cross-functional visibility to maintenance, engineering, safety and compliance teams, accelerating decision-making and supporting better collaboration.

Looking ahead, Synlait plans to deploy IoT sensors for condition-based maintenance and prescriptive analytics, further reducing total cost of ownership, supporting its sustainability agenda and enabling scalable, quality-assured growth in new international markets.

About Octave

Octave is a leader in enterprise software, turning data into decisive action and intelligence into your edge. Our software solves for and simplifies complexity, from the design and build to operations and protection of people, property, and assets— for any scope, at any scale. For decades, we’ve partnered with customers to sharpen performance, elevate efficiency, and amplify results. From factory floors to entire cities, our solutions are tuned to scale up what’s possible from day one onward.

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