

TITLE**CALIBRATION METHOD FOR LIQUID FLOWMETER****FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

5 The present invention relates to the field of engineering, and particularly relates to a calibration method for a liquid-flow measuring system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 In an animal-feed manufacturing system, there is mixing of solid- and liquid-type raw materials as animal-feed ingredients, such as cassava, corn, paddy, and rice bran, with liquid raw materials as animal-feed additives used in the animal-feed manufacturing, such as water, molasses, fungicide, feed-quality preservatives, and flavors, such that the animal feed with complete nutrient content according to its formulation and suitable moisture content is obtained. It is common practice that animal-feed ingredients and various chemical agents must be weighed or measured for their proper amounts and introduced into a mixing tank before subjected to any further processing, such as agitating, grinding, heating, pelletizing, and packaging, such that a finished animal-feed product is obtained and ready for market.

15 For a continuous manufacturing process, the raw materials and various ingredients are conveyed continuously to the mixing tank. The solid raw materials and ingredients are weighed by weighing scales or load cells while they are conveying by conveyor belts or screw conveyors to the mixing tank. At the same time, the liquid ingredients are weighed, and/or liquid flow rates of the liquid ingredients are measured by flowmeters in order to obtain proper amounts according to the given formulation. Therefore, accuracy of the liquid flowmeters is extremely important, and the flowmeters must necessarily be calibrated so that they can always attain the accuracy.

20 At present, for the flowmeter calibration, the entire manufacturing process must generally be stopped in order to perform the flowmeter calibration, and then the liquid used in the process, such as water and fungicide, which its weight is certainly known, is pumped through the flowmeter to be calibrated over a certain time interval. Thereafter, a reading of the meter is acquired in order to compare with an average flow rate of the liquid calculated from the known weights and used time intervals, so that an error of said flowmeter is known, and then adjustment is performed to obtain the correct value.

30 A practical flowmeter calibration system, including converting a counted pulse signal acquired from the flowmeter to a weight, usually must have a signal receiver, a processor and a human-machine interface. By weighing a real weight, the pulse signal value outputted from the flowmeter is acquired, then the data is used for calculating a parameter used for comparing with the

real weight of liquid flowed through the flowmeter, wherein the liquid flowed through the flowmeter must be outputted for weighing
at the actual point-of-use (endpoint) due to the different liquid-flow rate in a pipe and pressure as compared with a point located near the flowmeter. If the real weights are weighed at a
5 flowmeter-installing point and the actual point-of-use, there will be a deviation as comparing the real weights obtained from the two points, even if a display at a control system is equal from the same counts and the same used parameters. In general, if the flowmeter calibration is required to be performed at another point, which is not the point-of-use, a valve used for adjusting the liquid pressure in the pipe must be adjusted, or the flow rate in the pipe must be
10 adjusted, so that the pressure is equal to the pressure at the point-of-use in order to obtain the correct and accurate calibration.

However, said calibration method has disadvantages, namely, it takes a relatively long time for calibration preparation, because the production line may have to be stopped for a long time, and the liquid subjected to the calibration cannot be immediately utilized, therefore it can
15 cause difficulty and waste. Furthermore, the existing calibration methods may also easily cause an error, because environmental factors of the calibration are not the same as the environmental factors during the actual operation, such as wear and tear of machines, namely, a pressure pump, pressure loss in a conveying pipe at various heights of measuring points, and the like, such that it results in that the conventional calibration method may have an error and lack of
20 efficiency.

Thai patent application number 0801005493, published as Patent Application Publication number 115985 on August 31, 2012, discloses a calibration system for a fuel-conveying system in a fuel manufacturing process, namely, an injection system of a fuel catalyst or a fuel additive, etc., the fuel contained in a tank is weighed by at least one load cells. The
25 calibration is performed by delivering the fuel of a directly- or indirectly-known weight to the load cells, and measuring the delivered-fuel weight. Then a comparison of the measured weight acquired from the load cells and the known weight is conducted in order to calculate a deviation between the two weights, so that the measurement is adjusted therefrom.

US patent number US 8,307,692 B2, entitled "Calibration of Dust Load Flow
30 Measuring Systems", issued on November 13, 2012 by Siemens Aktiengesellschaft, Germany, shows a method for calibrating a dust load flow measuring system, wherein the pulverized fuel dust is pneumatically driven. In said method, the pressure between a receiving container and a metering container is controlled to be a constant value of the actual-operating pressure throughout the

calibration by opening/closing control of a pressure control valve. However, said method cannot be applied to a liquid-flowmeter calibration, wherein the liquid is driven by a pressure pump or gravity feed.

US patent application publication number US 2017/0052056 A1, entitled "Method and Apparatus for Testing Liquid Flowmeter", by Azbil Corporation, Japan, discloses a liquid-flowmeter calibration, wherein the liquid is pumped through the flowmeter into a weighing tank weighed by load cells, while the temperature and pressure of the liquid flowed through the flowmeter are being measured throughout the calibration, and then an instrumental error of the flowmeter is calculated based on the measured values. However, the method according to said application does not take actual-operating environment into consideration, such as heights of weighing points for the calibration, a height and a length of a pipe, and wear and tear of a liquid conveying pump, which may result in that the liquid flow is not equal to the flow during actual operation, even though the pump is operated at the same rotational speed. Furthermore, it does not appear that whether the liquid subjected to the calibration can be reused or not.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

To solve the foregoing problems, an object of the present invention is to provide a calibration method for a liquid flowmeter, wherein it is accurate, it can be performed quickly in a semi-automatic or automatic manner, it can also achieve cost saving in the calibration without waste by means of reusing the liquid subjected to the calibration, and it can also achieve time reducing in stopping of a production line, such that it can reduce both time and raw material losses in the production, therefore, the production cost can be reduced.

The calibration method for the liquid flowmeter according to this invention comprises: providing a first tank for receiving said liquid to be measured and a liquid storage tank connected to said first tank; providing a liquid delivering line for conveying the liquid from said liquid storage tank to an external device; providing a weighing sensor for weighing the liquid contained in either the first tank or the liquid storage tank, wherein during performing the calibration for the flowmeter: the liquid delivering line is disconnected in a conveyance direction downstream of the liquid flowmeter from the external device; said liquid delivering line is connected in the conveyance direction downstream of said liquid flowmeter to a calibrating line connected to said first tank; and a flow rate of the conveyed liquid within a certain time interval is determined by using change in the liquid weight measured by said weighing sensor in said time interval, wherein the liquid from said liquid storage tank is delivered through the liquid delivering line back to said first tank,

and the flow rate of the liquid from the liquid storage tank to said first tank is controlled to be a substantially constant value.

In view of the method for delivering the liquid from said liquid storage tank through the liquid delivering line back to said first tank, when the calibration is completed, the liquid subjected to the calibration can immediately be reused without any waste, so that it can reduce a stopping time of the production line, and it can also reduce both time and raw material losses in the production. Therefore, the production cost can be reduced.

In one embodiment of this invention, the calibration method for the liquid flowmeter may include controlling the flow rate of the liquid from the liquid storage tank to said first tank to be constant during said calibration by a feedback control method with a signal from the flowmeter. In view of said method, the environment can be controlled during the calibration to be similar to the actual-operating environment. Therefore, the calibration is accurate and can reduce an error.

Furthermore, during performing the flowmeter calibration, the disconnecting of the liquid delivering line from the external device and the connecting of said liquid delivering line to said calibrating line are conducted by two 2-way valves or a 3-way valve controlled either manually, or electrically, or pneumatically. Therefore, the calibration can be performed automatically or semi-automatically.

Furthermore, the calibration method may be a single-point calibration or a multi-point calibration.

The method according to this invention can be applied to an animal-feed manufacturing apparatus, so that the animal feed with proper liquid raw materials according to the formulation and given physical properties is obtained.

In another embodiment of this invention, the liquid used in the calibration may be flowed from the first tank to the liquid storage tank by either gravity feed or a driving force from a pump installed interposedly in a flowing line between the first tank and the liquid storage tank. Such additional pump installation can lead to increase a flow speed of the liquid flowed between the first tank and the liquid storage tank. Therefore, a time interval that the production process needed to be stopped can be reduced.

Furthermore, the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the flowmeter in the calibration is adjusted to be the actual-operating flow rate.

In another embodiment of the calibration method according to this invention, a setpoint used for adjusting of said liquid flow rate to be constant is calculated from an average of the actual-

operating flow rates before performing the calibration. Therefore, a calibration error due to wear and tear of machines used in the process can be reduced.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 illustrates a first embodiment of an apparatus for a calibration process for a liquid flowmeter of a method according to this invention.

Fig. 2 illustrates a second embodiment of an apparatus for a calibration process for the liquid flowmeter of a method according to this invention.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a control system for controlling a liquid flow rate to be constant by a feedback control method.

Fig. 4 illustrates an example of data resulted from a multi-point calibration.

Fig. 5 illustrates a workflow of the method according to this invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The description provides explanation of the invention by exemplifying this invention and refers to the accompanying drawings in order to be examples and help describing them more clearly, in which similar reference numerals refer to similar elements in these drawings. However, it is not intended to limit this invention by this description, and the scope of this invention is defined by the attached claims.

Fig. 1 illustrates a first embodiment of an apparatus for performing a calibration method for a liquid flowmeter of a method according to this invention.

The apparatus consists of a first tank **12** used for receiving a liquid to be calibrated, such as fungicide, water, and feed-quality preservatives, a liquid storage tank **14** fluidly connected to the first tank **12** via a valve **36**, which may be a manual controlled valve or a pneumatic or electrical opening/closing-controlled valve. The liquid outputted from the liquid storage tank **14** is flowed through a liquid delivering line **9** in order to convey the liquid from said liquid storage tank **14** to an external device, such as a conveying device, and an animal-feed mixing tank.

In a normal operation, the liquid is driven by an electric motor and pump **24** in order to obtain the pressurized liquid, wherein, preferably, a rotational speed of the electric motor is controlled by an inverter or the like. The liquid flowed through the pump **24** is flowed through a liquid flowmeter **20** used for measuring a flow rate of the liquid flowed through the liquid delivering line **9**, and then it is flowed through a valve **34** but it is blocked such that the liquid cannot be flowed through a valve **32**. The valves **32** and **34** may be two 2-way valves or only one

3-way valve, wherein these valves are manually controlled , or electrically controlled , or pneumatically controlled .

According to **Fig. 1**, a line branched from the liquid delivering line **9** is provide at a point located downstream of the liquid flowmeter **20**. Said branched line serves as a calibrating line **7**, while the other end of the calibrating line **7** is fluidly connected to the first tank **12**.

In the normal operation, the calibrating line **7** is blocked by the valve **32** in order to prevent the liquid from flowing into the calibrating line **7**.

The flowmeter **20** may be a displacement flowmeter or the like. The flowmeter **20** outputs an electrical signal as a pulse, and such pulse signal is sent to a signal converter **44** in order to convert the pulse signal to a standard electrical signal. The electrical signal outputted from the signal converter **44** is directly proportional to a measured liquid-flow rate. Then the signal outputted from the signal converter **44** is sent to a controlling means **10** in order to be used in an operation control and display the flow rate to inform an operator.

The flowmeter **20** must be calibrated in order to always output an accurate measured value, otherwise it will cause an error in the manufacturing process and may not achieve a desired quality of the product.

The controlling means **10** may, for example, be a PID microcontroller or the like (for example P controller with gain (k constant) = 1) having an internal memory unit for storing data and programs necessary for the operation, can receive electrical signals from external sensors, and can output electrical signals in order to control devices connected to the controlling means **10** via input/output ports in order to operate according to a desired written program. The controlling means **10** performs the operation control of all devices, and may also include a display and a keyboard or a key pad (not shown) or a device for receiving input entered from a user.

Furthermore, the apparatus also consists of at least one weighing sensor or device (load cells) **22**, which can be installed in many different forms. In the first embodiment as shown in **Fig. 1**, the weight scale type of the load cells **22** is installed in a manner of hanging from a ceiling in order to weigh the first tank **12**, while the load cells **22** is installed in order to weigh the liquid storage tank **14** in the second embodiment shown in **Fig. 2** as further described in detail hereafter.

In the first form, the first tank **12** is installed at a level higher than the liquid storage tank, such that the liquid can be flowed back into the liquid storage tank **14** by gravity feed. In this

embodiment, the load cells are installed above the first tank 12 in order to serve as a weight reader for the liquid contained in the first tank 12.

The signal outputted from the load cells 22 is sent to a signal converter 42, wherein the signal is converted to electrical analog signal (such as signal 0 - 10 Vdc or 4 - 20 mA) corresponding to a measured weight acquired from the load cells 22. The electrical signal outputted from the signal converter 42 is directly proportional to the weight of the liquid contained in the measured tank. Then the signal outputted from the signal converter 42 is sent to the controlling means 10 in order to be used for further processing.

During performing the calibration of the flowmeter 20, the controlling means is configured such that the liquid delivering line 9 is disconnected in a conveyance direction downstream of the liquid flowmeter 20 from the external device, and, at the same time, said liquid delivering line 9 is connected in the conveyance direction downstream of said liquid flowmeter 20 to the calibrating line 7 connected to said first tank 12, so that the liquid from the liquid storage tank 14 is pumped by the pump 24 through the flowmeter 20 via the valve 32 to the first tank 12.

According to the first embodiment of this invention, the valve 36 is closed in order to block the liquid from the first tank 12 from flowing to the liquid storage tank 14. Then the controlling means 10 starts storing the weight and time data of the first tank 12 and the liquid contained therein together with the pulse signal data from the flowmeter 20 in relation to time, which is continuously increased, because the liquid is pumped back through the calibrating line 7, and stops storing the weight and time data when the calibration is completed.

Then the flow rate of the conveyed liquid within a certain time interval is determined by using change in the liquid weight measured by said weighing sensor 22 in said time interval, wherein the liquid from said liquid storage tank 14 is delivered through the liquid delivering line back to said first tank 12, and the flow rate of the liquid flowed from the liquid storage tank 14 to said first tank 12 is controlled to be a substantially constant value, for example, by an inverter (not shown), such that its condition is close to the actual-operating condition as much as possible.

Fig. 2 illustrates a second embodiment of an apparatus for a calibration process for the liquid flowmeter of a method according to this invention,

According to **Fig. 2**, the configuration is similar to that of the embodiment as shown in **Fig. 1**, except that load cells 22 is installed in order to weigh a liquid storage tank 14 served as a reservoir bin, wherein the weight is included the weight of the liquid contained in the liquid storage

tank **14**. The second embodiment is suited for the calibration of the flowmeter **20** by measuring the reduction of the weight of the liquid contained in the liquid storage tank **14**. In this embodiment, a pump **39** may be used for pumping the liquid from a first tank **12** back to the liquid storage tank **14** or may let the liquid flowed back through a valve **36** by the gravitational force. In this embodiment, the load cells **22** is installed underneath the liquid storage tank **14** for reading the loss weight during performing the calibration.

During the calibration according to the second embodiment, a controlling means **10** starts storing the weight data of the liquid storage tank **14** and the liquid contained therein, which is continuously decreased, because the liquid contained in the liquid storage tank **14** is pump out, together with the pulse signal data from the flowmeter **20** in relation to time, and stops storing the weight data acquired from the load cells, when the calibration is completed, so that it is used for determining the change in the weight during the calibration.

Furthermore, in the second embodiment, it further consists of a pump **39** installed interposedly in a flowing line between the first tank **12** and the liquid storage tank **14** for filling the liquid into the liquid storage tank **14** up to a predetermined weight rapidly before starting the calibration. In view of the liquid is flowed from the first tank **12** to the liquid storage tank **14** by the pump **39** instead of the gravity feed, the calibration time interval can be reduced.

According to the second embodiment, other elements are similar to those of the first embodiment as shown in **Fig. 1**, and the similar reference numerals are used, therefore, it is not necessary to repeatedly explain it here.

After the calibration is completed, when the liquid flowmeter **20** is properly calibrated so that its accuracy can be achieved therefrom, the controlling means will open the valve **34** and close the valve **32** in order to be able to further perform according to the manufacturing process.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a control system for controlling the liquid flow rate to be constant by a feedback control method.

According to **Fig. 3**, an inverter **11** is a device for driving a motor/pump **24** in order to control flow rate of the pump **24** by varying motor input frequency of the motor and pump **24** in the process to be a predetermined setpoint (pulse/minute or pulse/second) at all time such that the flow rate of the liquid at a calibration point is equal to that at an endpoint, which is connected to the external device. If the endpoint is located far and below the calibration point, the inverter will decrease the flow rate of the pump **24**, such that the liquid flowed out of the calibration point is decreased. But if the endpoint is located far and above the calibration point, the inverter will increase the flow rate of the pump **24**, such that the liquid flowed out of the calibration point is

increased. The pulse signal acquired from the flow-measuring sensor (flowmeter) **20** in the process is converted to the flow rate in a unit of pulse/minute (or pulse/second depending on the flowmeter specification), wherein one pulse is directly proportional to the instantaneous speed and volume of the liquid flowed through the flow-measuring sensor. The pulse/minute (or pulse/second) signal is sent as a feedback signal to the controller **10** in order to instruct the inverter to increase or decrease the output value of the inverter which is a rotational speed control instruction of the electric motor/pump **24**, so that the liquid flowed through the pump **24** from the liquid storage tank **14** to the first tank **12** during the calibration is controlled to be a substantially constant flow rate. As explained above, it results that the measurement error is significantly reduced.

Next, calibration steps of the calibration method according to this invention is described referring to **Fig. 4** and **Fig. 5**.

Next, the calibration method according to this invention is explained referring to **Fig. 5**.

According to **Fig. 5**, when the calibration is started, after the liquid delivering line **9** is disconnected in a conveyance direction downstream of the liquid flowmeter **20** from the external device, and said liquid delivering line **9** is connected in the conveyance direction downstream of said liquid flowmeter **20** to a calibrating line **7** connected to the first tank **12** according to steps **S502** and **S504**, respectively, the controller then determines an actual flow rate of the conveyed liquid within a certain time interval, namely, from a calibration starting point to a given point (target setpoint), in order to stop performing the calibration, wherein the data are stored intermittently as given in the memory of the controller **10** (step **S506**), and in step **S508**, the controller calculates the actual flow rate of the conveyed liquid within this certain time interval from the change rate in the measured weight acquired from the load cells **22**, and the reading from the flowmeter **20** is adjusted, such that it conforms to the calculated actual flow rate as will be further explained in detail later.

The controller preferably uses machine learning data obtained from the actual operation for automatically controlling the inverter in the calibration and adjusting the flow rate of the motor/pump **24** to be increased in order to compensate a reduced flow rate in the case of an efficiency deterioration of the pump according to an example as will be further explained in detail later.

In actual operation, the flow rate is controlled by the controller **10** via the operation of the inverter **11** for operating of the pump **24** to be in a range of 50-90% of the operational efficiency of the pump **24**, and the flow rate data are stored in the memory, wherein the flow rate is stored in the unit of pulse per second or hertz.

For the calibration, the controller **10** controls the valve **32** to be opened for filling the liquid back for using in the calibration. The speed of the liquid flowed in the pipe may not equal to that at the endpoint. The inverter **11** controls the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the pump to be equal to the flow rate at the endpoint using the feedback control with the signal from the flowmeter, wherein the signal may be an analog signal (4-20 mA, 0-10 Vac), or a signal obtained from a pulse train output, or a signal obtained from a serial bus communication system, such as RS232, RS485, and CAN Bus, or the like, such that the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the pump is equal to that at the endpoint during the actual operation.

Table 1 shows an example of results of a weighing test,

Weighing Point	Height (m)	Pulse Rate (Hz)(1)	Inverter Output (%) (2)	Measured Weight (kg)(3)	Actual Weight (kg)(4)	Note
1	(+1)	100	80	25.00	22.50	The calibration point is located near the flowmeter.
2	(+20)	83	80	25.00	25.00	The actual point-of-use has the height and length of the pipe as the factors.
3	(-10)	110	80	25.00	21.30	The actual point-of-use has the height less than that of the flowmeter.
1	(+1)	83	74	25.00	25.00	The inverter is adjusted according to learning use obtained from the machine learning.
2	(+20)	83	80	25.00	25.00	The machine learns from the actual flow rate.

3	(-10)	83	68	25.00	25.00	The inverter is adjusted according to learning use obtained from the machine learning.
2	(+20)	83	85	25.00	25.00	The inverter increases the rotational speed of the motor in the case of the reduced flow rate.

wherein

- (1) the count rate acquired from the flowmeter **20** (pulse/second or hertz),
- (2) the duty cycle outputs of the inverter **11** calculated in %,
- (3) the weight shown on the controller (kg),
- 5 (4) the actual measured weight obtained by weighing the liquid using the external scale, and
- (5) the machine learns from calculating an average of the actual operation in the last 1-10 times (calculates the average) in order to be set as the setpoint for using in adjusting the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the pump to be constant.

Next, the single-point calibration and the multi-point calibration performed at the point
 10 located near the flowmeter installation point using the inverter **11** for controlling the flow are explained.

The single-point calibration is a calibration using only single pulse value as a given setpoint. As an example shown below, the pulse target is set to be 400 pulses, and then the actual weight is weighed to be 50 kg, and the calibration is stopped when the measured pulses acquired
 15 from the flowmeter is equal to the pulse target, wherein the flow rate is controlled to be constant throughout the calibration, and the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the flowmeter **20** is adjusted to be equal to the flow rate during the actual operation.

Y = measured weight acquired from load cells X = number of counted pulses acquired from flowmeter m = parameter value

Calibration Point	Pulse (X)	Weight in kg (Y)
1	400	50

20 Formula $Y = mX$; ---- (1)

$$m = 0.125$$

Then the measured data are used for calculating m used in setting values in the controller in order to be used in a further process. An advantage of the single-point calibration is that it can be done in a short time.

Next, the multi-point calibration is described. The multi-point calibration is a calibration using multiple pulse values as the target setpoints. As shown in **Fig. 4**, for example, the pulse targets are set to be 400, 800, and 1,000 pulses, and then the actual weights are weighed to be 50, 90, and 110 kg, respectively. Then these data are used for calculating parameters in order to find a linear relation according to an equation (2):

$$Y = a + bX, \quad \text{---- (2)}$$

where Y is the measured weight acquired from the load cells, X is the number of the counted pulses acquired from the flowmeter, a is a value of y of the point of intersection with Y-axis, and b is a slope, as approximated from the data.

The a and b can be calculated from following equations:

$$a = \frac{(\sum y)(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)(\sum xy)}{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2}; \text{ and} \quad \text{----(3)}$$

$$b = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2}, \quad \text{----(4)}$$

where Y_i is the measured weight acquired from the load cells **22** at the i^{th} value, and X_i the number of the counted pulses acquired from the flowmeter at the i^{th} value, wherein i is a counting number that is equal to or more than 1.

Table 2 is an example of data obtained from the 3-point calibration for the flowmeter.

Calibration Point	Pulse (X)	Weight in kg (Y)	xy	x ²	y ²
1	400	50	20000	160000	2500
2	800	90	72000	640000	8100
3	1000	110	110000	1000000	12100
Σ	2200	250	202000	1800000	22700

$\Sigma x = 2200$, $\Sigma y = 250$, $\Sigma xy = 202000$, $\Sigma x^2 = 1800000$, $\Sigma y^2 = 22700$, $n = \text{number of data sets} = 3$

$$a = 10$$

$$b = 0.1$$

- 5 The values of the calculated a and b are used for adjusting parameters in the controller in order to be used for controlling in a further process.

As described above, it shows that this invention relates to the calibration method for various flowmeters, such as a displacement flowmeter. In the prior art, the calibration method must be performed by testing, wherein a liquid is flowed through an actual flowmeter, and then the weight of the liquid flowed out of the flowmeter is weighed in order to calculate values of parameters used in a control system, which can be divided into two main sections, namely, (1) a signal receiving and processing unit comprising a readymade meter and an embedded chip programmable logic control unit, and (2) a human-machine interface. The readymade meter may have press-buttons or accessory displays for users, such as a readymade screen with controlling via control buttons, a readymade screen with controlling via a touch screen or a computer having an auxiliary program.

For the method according to this invention, the liquid weighing process can be easily performed, and at the same time, the novel calibration method can rapidly calculate the parameter values, has no waste of the liquid subjected to the calibration, and has no time loss relating to the time for refilling the tested liquid back into the tank.

For the proposed method according to this invention, the calibration can be performed in the region located near the flowmeter installation position using the inverter for properly controlling the liquid flow rate, and at the same time, the weighing system can be installed on the upper side of the device itself (the first form), or can use the loss-in-weight principle (the second form) having the valve control system for controlling the flow of the liquid back to be weighed at the upper part. The purpose of this invention is that the single-point and multi-point calibration can easily

be performed, wherein it can be performed in the region within 5 m from the flowmeter, even though the actual point-of-use is much farther apart therefrom.

For the method according to this invention, the apparatus can perform both of the manual flowmeter calibration, wherein the flow rate is adjusted by the operator of the inverter, and automatic flowmeter calibration, wherein the machine learning obtained from the actual operation is used for the automatic control of the inverter using retro-statistical data obtained from the actual operation of the motor and pump as the setpoint of the inverter.

Furthermore, for the method according to this invention, the liquid subjected to the calibration can be reused immediately without discarding the liquid waste or refilled to the tank by pumping or forcing down, whereas in the prior art, the weighed liquid must be discarded or must be refilled to the tank later. Therefore, coming in contact with the liquid, which can be hazardous substance, can be reduced, it can promote the safety to workers.

Although the present invention has been described in details in connection with the accompanying drawings as embodiments of the invention, it must be understood that various modifications or alternations may be made by a person having ordinary skill in the art without departing from the scope and concept of the invention. The scope of the present invention conforms with the features of this invention as defined by the attached claims. It also includes other features structures or elements of the invention that even though not specified particularly in the claims, but they are considered to be useful and provide the same results as the features of this invention specified in the claims.

We claim,

1. A calibration method for a liquid flowmeter comprising the steps of:
providing a first tank (12) for receiving said liquid to be measured and a liquid storage tank (14) connected to said first tank (12);
5 providing a liquid delivering line (9) for conveying the liquid from said liquid storage tank (14) to an external device;
providing a weighing sensor (22) for weighing the liquid contained in either the first tank (12) or the liquid storage tank (14),
during performing the calibration for the flowmeter (20):
10 disconnecting the liquid delivering line (9) in a conveyance direction downstream of the liquid flowmeter (20) from the external device;
connection said liquid delivering line (9) in the conveyance direction downstream of said liquid flowmeter (20) to a calibrating line (7) connected to said first tank (12); and
determining a flow rate of the conveyed liquid within a predetermined time
15 interval based on the change in the liquid weight measured by said weighing sensor (22) in said predetermined time interval,
the method being characterized in that, the liquid from said liquid storage tank (14) is delivered through the liquid delivering line back to said first tank (12), and the flow rate of the liquid from the liquid storage tank (14) to said first tank (12) is controlled so as to be
20 substantially constant during calibration.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein controlling the flow rate of the liquid from the liquid storage tank (14) to the first tank (12) during said calibration so as to be substantially constant is a feedback control using a signal from the flowmeter (20).
3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein, during the calibration for the
25 flowmeter, disconnecting of the liquid delivering line (9) from the external device and connecting of said liquid delivering line (9) to said calibrating line (7) are conducted by a two 2-way valves (32, 34) or a 3-way valve which is controlled either manually, or electrically, or pneumatically.
4. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said calibration
30 method is a single-point calibration or a multi-point calibration.
5. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said method is applicable to an animal-feed manufacturing apparatus.

6. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the liquid flows from the first tank (12) to the liquid storage tank (14) by either gravity feed or a driving force from a pump (39) installed interposedly in a flowing line between the first tank (12) and the liquid storage tank (14).

5 7. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the flow rate of the liquid flowed through the flowmeter (20) in the calibration is adjusted to be substantially equal to the actual-operating flow rate.

8. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein a setpoint used for adjusting of said liquid flow rate so as to be substantially constant is calculated from an
10 average of the actual-operating flow rates within a specific period of time before performing the calibration.