

Precision Farming Technology

weather patterns has resulted in chronic planting-time crunches for growers. In a 2005 survey² of 13,250 corn growers across more than 20 states, 77 percent of respondents associated timely planting with increased yields. However, 75 percent of respondents said they were unable to finish planting by their preferred date. Many farm

operators seek new technology to get more acres planted per day—or night.

Labor Shortage Solution

Many owner/operators of tractors, sprayers and harvesters equipped with automated steering systems report that previously inexperienced operators can perform the most demanding

machine operations after only a few minutes of in-field training.

Improved Machinery Efficiencies

Operators who equip a primary tractor with RTK automated steering find they run it for longer hours in more applications and in more difficult conditions. In Mississippi, cotton growers can build ridges with 4-, 6- or 8-row

hippers, plant with 8-row planters and harvest with 6-row pickers. In many cases, this helps extend the life of older equipment.

Precise Fertilizer and Seed Placement

There is a revival in the U.S. towards strip tillage. With GPS RTK technology using +/- 1 inch performance, the fertilizer is positioned in the furrow, typically in the fall. In the spring, seed is planted directly over the strip of fertilizer. This ensures that the seed is close to the nutrients to help stimulate plant growth and development.

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Success Drives Success

Once the user has experienced the payback and benefits from a GPS guidance or automated steering system, the relatively low additional cost of purchasing the other precision agricultural technology will encourage the grower to try out other precision tasks. Capabilities such as application rate control, yield monitoring or automatic boom section control are now possible via a single in-cab display.

Because GPS removes the need to drive the vehicle, operators can focus on more complex operations occurring behind the vehicle. It is now common to integrate several operations into a single machine to reduce the number of passes over a field. Growers now routinely position seed to be planted at the spacing and position desired. It is even possible to cultivate within an inch of the plants to remove weeds or apply chemicals in a narrow band to reduce chemical inputs.

Adding It All Up

The current adoption rate of precision farming guidance systems is taking place at a rate faster than many industry experts had predicted. This phenomenon has led thousands of crop growers to try new, innovative farm practices. Because users of GPS guidance or steering systems can now experiment with and adopt precision farming to other tasks for a relatively small additional investment, precision farming practices are rapidly expanding at many levels. This is making growers vastly more productive, more responsive to the environment, more profitable and thereby more competitive in the global market.

Batte, Marvin, "Economics of Precision Farming", Feb 2007, Ohio State University report
² Landec Ag, Landec Corporation, "Survey reveals missed planting windows remain pervasive problem for corn growers," news release, November 10, 2005

*Offer applies to purchase of \$4,000 or more when you use your CRR Capital Commercial Revolving Account.