

# Tech support provides an edge

By WILLIE VOGT

**P**UTTING top technology to work on the farm requires learning how those tools do the job. For precision ag users, from early mappers to today's investors in precision guidance tools — from lightbars to autosteering — the key is support.

"You have to be there for the farmer," says Darryl Roeder, Ag Management Solutions support for Gilsinger Implement out of Plymouth, Ind.

Randy Glinge, a Bourbon, Ind., farmer, jokes that he has Roeder's cell phone number programmed into his phone so he can reach him anytime. Roeder concurs that his number is on

speed dial for most customers.

That's the modern task of today's field support effort for any dealer serving the market. Farmers need information fast, and sometimes it's as simple as reaching the right source by phone. With high-tech equipment, knowing a few simple steps or the right buttons to push can get you up and running quickly.

Roeder, who works with the full range of precision ag customers for the dealership, sees a growing interest in documentation support. The newest tools — GreenStar 2600 Display, for example — offer farmers ways to map, track and record a number of operations.

"I do a lot of documentation support these days," Roeder says.

## Plenty to install

Yet he's helping install the full range of equipment. "The lightbar has been extremely popular, too," he notes. "It's a way for a lot of people to get started, and it's a stepping stone to autoguidance."

Roeder says he's planning to put an AutoTrac demonstration system on the Glinge tractor to show them how to add true auto-steering to the machine.

The AMS support title is relatively new for Roeder, who operated as a field service tech for Gilsinger's until recently. Today his job is about 90% AMS with about 10% field install when needed. As for his attitude about technology? Just check out his cell phone.

"I wouldn't be without my iPhone," says the service tech with a grin. "It's a great tool for me." And a quick check of his phone shows he's doing more than simply calling with it. He's installed a large number of applications, too — mostly the free ones. It's a sign of the times.

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## Rising investment in infrastructure

**T**HERE'S a lot of talk about investing in U.S. infrastructure these days, yet farm equipment dealers are already ahead of the curve. The rising interest in the highest level of precision farming — real-time kinematic, or RTK — has dealers of every brand investing in new RTK tower networks.

In the Plymouth, Ind., area, the Gilsinger Implement business, which includes four stores, has installed seven towers to be up and running this season. These towers provide the RTK differential signal as far as 12 miles away. Farmers who have invested in the highest level of precision will find they have subscription services available from a wide range of sources.

Of course, different brands work on different frequencies, so one brand's RTK network can't provide a signal to another brand's receivers. However, dealer networks that set up these systems are working to keep the lines of communication open.

"We all want access to each other's networks," says Darryl Roeder, AMS tech, Gilsinger Implement. "So we have communications set up between our network and others." It's a growing trend for farmers considering the investment in higher-end autoguidance products.

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