

Monitor maker looks at the future of the technology



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DO YOUR HOMEWORK: AgSense President Terry Schiltz says that producers should ask neighbors and do their research before adopting new remote monitoring technologies on their farms.

By **CURT ARENS**

Irrigators like Aaron Zimmerman and his brother Ryan at Pierce, Neb., want to know more about the interactions of their center pivots and their soils.

"The driver of technology on pivots is that growers want to know data and understand what is going on with their water," says Terry Schiltz, president of AgSense, an agricultural technology company based in Huron, S.D.

"They want to know how the water works into their own farms, and they want water management reports."

At the Nebraska Alfalfa Marketing Association convention held recently in Norfolk, Neb., Schiltz told producers that the most useful monitoring technologies pull multiple inputs together.

This gathering of monitoring technologies helps growers understand the relationship among water, soil type, production and fertigation.

"It is a decision support system that takes data and places it in management decisions" in combination with soil water, flow meter readings and yield data, he says.

With pivot and soil moisture-monitoring systems becoming more sophisticated, Schiltz believes the future of these innovations will be in ease and convenience of use.

"Data will start working more tightly together," he predicts.

"There will be a convergence of data that leads to better information. Simplification is the biggest driver of all of this," he says.

"Companies will simplify it and make it easy to use. If we can accomplish that, we will have a greater adoption rate."

The big issue for most producers considering new irrigation remote monitoring technologies is technical support, according to Schiltz.

Producers should ask if they can easily contact company technical support team members if they have a problem with the system.

"Ask neighbors and talk to dealers," Schiltz advised producers who are considering adopting monitoring systems.

"Go to blogs and look at honest reactions" from growers who are already using the systems they might be researching.

You can learn more about general trends in remote field management by calling AgSense at 605-352-8350, or visiting its website at agsense.net.