

From a Distance

Keep an eye on pivots when you are miles away.

By Rosalie Tennison

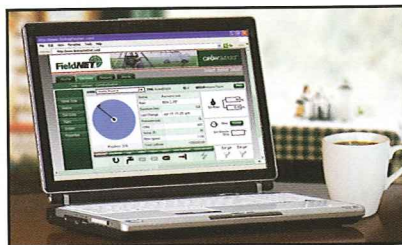
MANAGING IRRIGATION SYSTEMS is a 24 hour/7 day-a-week job during the growing season. The job just got easier though with FieldNet, the first completely web-based, real-time irrigation management system that allows growers another way to save time and money by eliminating the drive to check on pivots day and night.

Growers can monitor the status of pivots via cell phone through real-time text message alerts that let them know when the status of a pivot changes. "Our growers are appreciating the interaction that FieldNet provides because they get alert messages by e-mail or voice message in real-time," says Scott Mills with New Way Irrigation, a Zimmatic dealer in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Monitoring is also available using a web portal – FieldNet with MapView – which provides a quick view of pivot location, pivot status, and water usage. In the case of water usage, regular reports allow for efficient management of available water resources. By accessing the portal from the Internet, growers can not only monitor, but also manage any

pivot, anytime, making adjustments from a remote location. It is also possible to adjust applications of fertilizer and crop protection products.

"FieldNet is new to Canada and some of our growers have only had it a couple of months," says Mills. "We find the system is very intuitive, and because it is a hosted service,



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if a grower's computer crashes, the information is protected. It's similar to Internet banking, so you won't lose data." A concern might be the difference in speed between dial-up and high speed Internet services, but Mills reports so far there have been no complaints.

The interface of the system is easy-to-use and looks the same as the control panel on the pivot, so there is no learning curve to understanding a new system. Plus, the speed of the error reports allows for re-programming pivots from remote locations quickly without having to make a trip out to the field.

There are two levels of FieldNet services – Advanced and Premier – which give growers a choice on the level of monitoring and control they need. The Advanced service works with competitor or Zimmatic machines, whereas the Premier service is only available on Zimmatic computerized machines. The Advanced system provides a basic monitoring service of on/off control, directions, and rates, while the Premier version adds greater control of water from pressure to flow and, in conjunction with other monitoring programs including GPS Pivot Position, will provide wind and rainfall information. Growers can start with the Advanced system and once they are comfortable with it, upgrade to the higher level of service if they decide they need more information and functionality.

FieldNet makes pivot management easier and faster whether from the comfort of your home, your child's baseball game, or your truck cab.

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MID-PLAINS
Implements Ltd.

ZIMMATIC
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Randy Turner
Carberry, MB
Ph: (204) 834-2515

Derek Blight
Portage la Prairie, MB
Ph: (204) 239-0584

e-mail: midplns@mts.net

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