

## THIS EDITION

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### "LET'S TRY DOING IT THE NEW WAY"

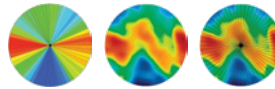
These South Carolina producers gave hydraulic drive a try and learned to love it.

PAGE 5

### THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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PAGE 9



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eNEWS



# IRRIGATION VIEW

FALL 2013

## Hydraulic Hybrids

Given the differences between T-L hydraulic drive pivots and those built by the company's three major competitors, most pivot irrigation customers can be divided into two groups — those who own electric drive units and those who own T-L models. However, Steve Rogers, who farms around 2,000 acres of corn, wheat and soybeans with his sons, Phillip and Adam, near Glendale, Kentucky, took things to a new level when he recently converted two older electric pivots to hydraulic-drive units.

Like a growing number of eastern cornbelt producers, Rogers has discovered the benefits of having irrigation

### AT A GLANCE

- Tired of electrical problems
- Converted to hydraulic drive
- 240 bu. Corn In Drought Year

available when the 40 to 50 inches of average annual rainfall fails to arrive at the appropriate time. In fact, he was the first producer in his area to install a center pivot unit and remained the only one with pivots for several years.

However, when two electric models were in dire need of replacement or repair, Rogers took the unusual step of rebuilding them with T-L hydraulic parts and components acquired from R & K Pivots, his local T-L dealer.

"I had already replaced an older electric pivot — which was the



Steve Rogers - Glendale, KY

first pivot I installed — with a new T-L pivot in 2012."

"The other two units were electric drives, which covered about 45 acres each," he continues. "The pipes were in good shape, but I was just getting tired of dealing with all the electrical problems out on the pivots. Something would

happen and it would shut down; but before I could try and figure it out, it would somehow fix itself and start working again. Plus, the gearboxes were getting to the point that they really needed to be replaced. So I finally decided I'd just see if I could convert them to hydraulic drive."

For Rogers, who is a natural

See [Hydraulic Hybrids](#) on page 3 ▶

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## "Let's Try Doing It The New Way."

After their experience with electric pivots, these South Carolina producers gave hydraulic drive a try and learned to love it.

When Barry Hutto and his sons, Dean and Richard, made the decision to invest in their own center pivot irrigation systems, they thought it was time to make a change. They had already had enough bad experiences with electric pivots on land they were renting. So when it came time to buy pivots for their own property near their home west

— See [The New Way](#) on page 5 ▶



LaMoine Smith  
Hinden, Nebraska



Joel Armistead  
Adairville, Kentucky

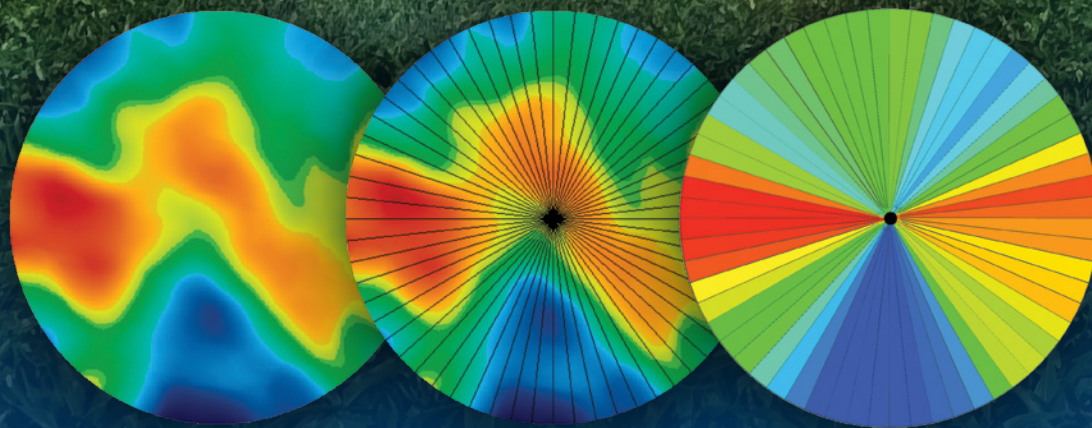
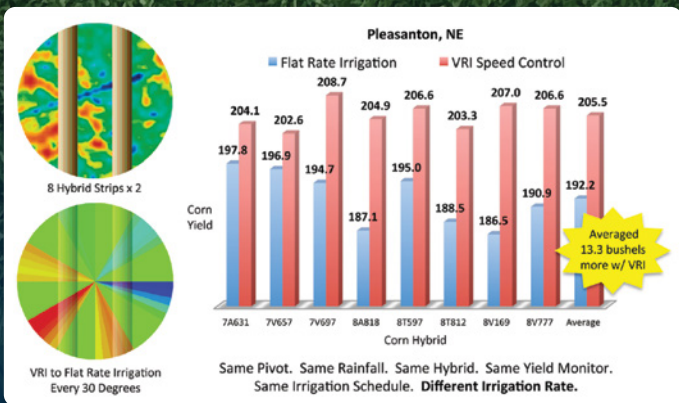
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## Rogers / Hydraulic Hybrids



had a gearbox on an electric pivot go out one afternoon when it was about 103 degrees outside. My two sons and I were out there replacing it and it was 'none too cool' in the middle of that corn. By the time we got out of there, we didn't have a dry

stitch of clothing on us."

The only drawback is the fact that Rogers only has three pivots that cover 180 total. And each of those is located near a river, where there's a year-around source of water.

"Irrigation certainly makes a difference, especially on corn," he relates. "We see an average increase of about 15 bushels per acre on soybeans under irrigation, but there's an even more significant difference on corn. Our long-term average

on dryland corn is about 160 bushels, whereas corn under the pivots runs between 240 and 250 bushels ... for an average difference of around 80 bushels per acre."

In 2012, when much of the Midwest was experiencing a drought, the variance was even more dramatic. While irrigated corn maintained its average of 240 bushels per acre, Rogers' dryland corn came in at just 25 to 40 bushels per acre.

"Although we're in an area with 40 plus inches of rain a year, it seems like it's either feast or

famine," Rogers says. "July is normally one of our wettest months, but I've seen it when it's dry as a bone, too."

"Even in the months when you do get the average, you may get all of it in one or two rainfalls, which means that most of it goes to the river. We're just trying to put some of it back on the field. As a result, the pivots have made money for us every year but two, which were summers when we got plenty of rain. One year we broke even and

the other, we probably lost a little money, due to the amount of time we did run the pumps."

While he doesn't have any more electric pivots to convert, Rogers says he does anticipate adding more hydraulic drive units in the next few years.

"I anticipate adding two or three more," he says. "Of course, they'll all be T-L units. I look for at least two of them to cover about 90 acres each, although one will be a full circle and the other a half circle."

"I had looked at the T-L hydraulic drive system before we bought the electric systems," he admits. "Looking back, though, I'm not sure we were ever happy with the route we took. I think we would have been better off if we would have had T-L pivots all along." ■

mechanic in his own right, it meant installing a new center pivot base tower, new hydraulic tubing and valves and new T-L hydraulic-drive gearboxes on each tower. While the conversions cost him several thousand dollars each, Rogers says each conversion was still less than the cost of a new pivot.

"My main incentive was that I was wanting to get rid of all the electrical problems related to electric drive without having to replace everything out there," he insists, noting that he did the conversions over this past winter. "I can still remember the time we

**"We would have been better off if we would have had T-L pivots all along."**



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# "Anything We Buy In The Future Will Be A T-L."

"The electric pivots have all shut down. Meanwhile, the T-Ls are always running."



Greg Kreikemeier - West Point, NE

When Greg Kreikemeier says, "Anything we buy in the future will be a T-L," he has what he's convinced are solid reasons. He's in charge of the 4,000-acre crop side of Kreikemeier Ag, Inc. outside of West Point, Nebraska, that's 60 percent corn.

His brother, Jason, handles their 3,000 head feedyard. 500 to 900 pounders at purchase, depending on the market, are turned two to three times a year.

60 percent of the cropland is irrigated. Six of the 19 center-pivots operated are T-Ls, so he has a lot of comparison experience with the electrics with which they started back in 1982.

"Overall," he points out, "maintenance on the T-Ls is so much easier. We just check the gear box grease, and that's generally it."

"They're a simple system to operate and maintain, as well. A farmer can walk up to a T-L and quickly see if anything is wrong. It won't require an electrician to

## AT A GLANCE

- Maintenance is so much easier
- Pivots Don't Require An Electrician
- Not 480 Volts on system "I like that a lot!"

figure it out."

"And, the T-L panels are simple, and not complicated. Regardless, we just haven't had much trouble with our T-Ls."

Kreikemeier also likes that there are only two gear boxes versus three gear boxes as on each electric tower. On their electric systems the contacts have become a problem. As a result, they typically experience a lot of nagging false stops on the first couple of laps every summer.

The decision to begin buying T-Ls was aided by the observations of a neighbor who has T-Ls that are now 30 to 40 years old. He told Kreikemeier, "I don't do much to them, just

change the hydraulic filter. T-Ls just run and run."

Bottom line: The Kreikemeier T-Ls are yet to have their first dealer service call.

Then there are the all-too-common summer electrical storms. Keep in mind that their fields stretch the diameter of a circle 60 miles. As Kreikemeier observes, "We might receive only .10-inch of rain with the lightning. However, the power has surged, and the electric pivots have all shut down. Meanwhile, the T-Ls are always running."

He's also noticed on some of their electric systems that the continuous starting and stopping is taking out the U-joints, often shearing them. He says that even on the newer electrics that this interrupted motion has to be harder on the gear boxes.

The continuous movement of the T-Ls is also appealing since Kreikemeier frequently fertigates through the systems. As he points out, "I do feel the constant movement significantly provides a more uniform application."

Then there's the matter of strength. No contest, according to Kreikemeier. He comments that, "The T-L's have the quality and seem to have a little bit heavier iron in them than the electrics. I do know the angle irons are heavier."

A careful shopper, with every center-pivot purchase in recent years he's always checked the T-L price against its competitors.

"The T-L has never been higher," he reports. "I believe we're getting a better, simpler, and more reliable machine."

"With a T-L there's not 480 volts going down the system. That I do like. I like that a lot!" he stresses.

"Because, a lot of times when you have to troubleshoot an electric, the quickest way is to do it live. Even an area electric center-pivot dealer was

electrocuted three or four years ago.

"I have five children at home, and I definitely have one 'farmer' for sure, and I hope five. So, that 480 volts is probably the most important reason for buying T-Ls. Years ago we didn't think about all that electricity. Today, it's different.

"Whatever the reason, we're happy with our T-Ls." ■

## Lagoon water supplements well

The nearest T-L to the feedlot is used to water 100 acres of alfalfa. Unfortunately, or in this case it doesn't matter, the well pumps at only a 300-gallon a minute rate.

However, this water is supplemented by 500 gallons a minute of manure lagoon water pumped from the feedyard. In a dry year they'll pump fresh water into the lagoon so there's enough water with which to irrigate.

Sediment basins throughout all the pens ensure that the water draining into the lagoon contains no cloggable solids.

"This lagoon water has pretty good value," Kreikemeier says. "It has some nitrogen in it and a lot of phosphorus. This is why we chose to go with alfalfa since it's a perfect crop for the phosphorus."



## Hutto / The New Way



Barry Hutto (left) and sons Dean and Richard - Holly Hill, SC

## AT A GLANCE

- “There is no copper to steal”
- “We understand hydraulics”
- “They’ve sure saved us a lot of extra expense and headaches”

of Holly Hill, South Carolina, it was time to try the T-L hydraulic drive system.

“We thought, ‘We’ve already done it the old way; let’s try doing it the new way,’” says Barry, who represents the fifth generation on the farm. “A brand new electric system might work very well, but up to that point, we hadn’t really had any good experiences.”

“One of the electric pivots is actually shared with a neighbor,” Dean adds. “The well is on our side and the pivot base is on the neighbor’s field; so the pivot covers a half circle on each field,” he adds, noting that they just split the cost on percentage of use. Of the 500 acres we picked up, over half of it is irrigated with three electric units.”

“Not only have we had the usual problems associated with electric-drive pivots, but the one unit has been rewired about five times, thanks to copper thieves,” Barry adds. “They probably did us a favor this last time, though, because we added a number of new components in the process of getting it running again that we probably wouldn’t have added otherwise.”

Dean says another selling point of T-L, besides the fact that there is no copper to steal, was the fact that the local T-L service technician lived just a few miles down the road from his dad’s house.

Still, irrigation is a relatively new venture for the Hutto family and most of their neighbors. After renting the properties with center pivots already on them, the Huttos added their first T-L

unit just a year later in 2006. Since that time, they’ve added at least one per year, bringing their total up 13 pivots at seven locations for total coverage of 850 acres. Of course, with 3,800 acres between the three partners, irrigated fields still represent less than one-fourth of the total.

“In 2005, we learned a lesson on irrigation,” Barry recalls. “That’s when we rented the fields with pivots already on them.

Getting enough rain isn’t usually the problem in South Carolina because I have a 10-year history on my farm of a 100-bushel average on dryland corn,” he continues, noting that he and his sons farm together, but own their own property separately. “The problem occurs when you don’t get the rain at the right time. With irrigation, and the ability to put water on the field at critical stages, corn has been yielding close to a 225-bushel average.”

The difference was even more dramatic in 2011, when the Carolinas experienced a severe drought. While irrigated corn continued to yield 200 bushels or more — even though the pumps ran almost continuously — the Huttos’ dryland corn averaged just 10 bushels per acre.

“All together, we have about 1,350 acres of corn, 975 acres of wheat, 700 acres in cotton and 350 in peanuts,” Dean explains. “In addition, we’ll have about 1,250 acres of soybeans each year; but part of those acres are double-cropped behind the

wheat.

“Right now, almost all of the irrigated fields are in corn, even though we do have about 50 acres of peanuts under a pivot,” he continues. “So we may have to look at our rotation down the road, since it has kind of gotten out of kilter. However, on our land, irrigated corn is the crop that makes us the most money, especially when you consider that we’re using chicken litter from some of the local poultry operations for fertilizer.”

The biggest challenge, though, isn’t the crop mix or even the availability of water. It’s small fields that are hard to irrigate with a pivot unit.

“I’d say 85 percent of our fields are 40 acres or less in size,” Barry relates. “As a result, our largest T-L pivot covers 90 acres in a full circle and the smallest covers 40 acres. And of the pivots that we do have, about half make a full circle, while the other half are ‘wiper’ systems that cover a half circle or so.”

The other issue is distance, which was further incentive for eliminating the copper wiring that has become so tempting to

thieves. According to Dean, over half the pivots that they have on their land are 15 miles or more from their farm headquarters.

“That kind of makes them an easy target when they’re out there in the boonies,” he says. “So, it puts us a little more at ease knowing there isn’t as much to steal. The reliability that comes with the hydraulic drive is also an advantage, given the distance between farms.”

Of course all three family members appreciate the hydraulic drive when it comes to service and troubleshooting.

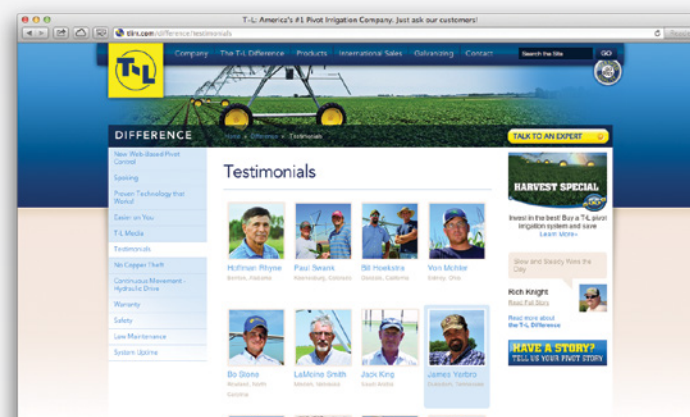
“We realize T-L pivots are going to break down or have problems, too,” Barry relates. “But we all understand hydraulics and we know what to look for when there’s a problem with them. It’s a different story when you have to wade through wet corn that’s over your head in the middle of July and crawl up on top of a tower to look for a blown fuse. Instead of carrying a voltmeter and all that stuff, all you need are a couple of wrenches and you’re good to go.”

“T-L pivots are well worth the initial investment,” he concludes. “They’ve sure saved us a lot of extra expense and headaches.” ■

“We’ve had the usual problems associated with the electric drive pivots. One unit has been rewired five times, thanks to copper thieves”



To see more of the stories in this issue, as well as what other producers are saying, visit our Testimonials page.



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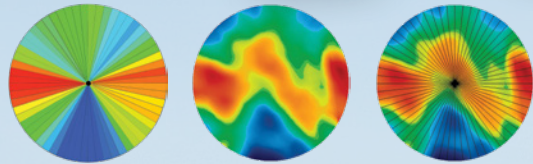
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# THE CHOICE IS SIMPLE.

**GPS Equipped**  
Pivot Controls  
Now with VRI



**Simple T-L**  
Alignment  
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## Drive Options



Worm Gear



Planetary Gear

- No Exposed Driveshaft
- No U-Joints
- No Center Drive Motor
- No Center Gear Reduction



**NO** high voltage  
copper wire to steal



**Auto**  
End Gun  
Booster



# The T-L Specialists

This Nebraska farm family has been buying and using T-L units for three generations.

With nearly 1,100 acres of corn and soybeans under T-L Irrigation pivots, Wayne Beck and his son, Curtis, are surely among T-L Irrigation's best customers. That's especially true when you consider Wayne has a history with T-L that goes back to 1956, when his dad drilled his first well and started using hand-moved 40-foot T-L aluminum pipe with sprinkler heads.

The irony is that the quarter-mile-long T-L tow lines the family bought in the early 1960s to replace the hand lines were the last T-L products the Becks ever purchased new. Even though they now own 13 T-L center pivots, all those units were purchased used and refurbished by Wayne and his dad, Harold, or, later, by Wayne and Curtis.

"The pull lines were so much easier to move than the hand move lines we used when I was a kid," says Wayne. "Of course, the first center pivot units were even easier than the pull lines," he adds, noting that they purchased their first pivot in 1977. "The move from hand lines to tow lines and, finally, center pivots also let us go from 38- and 40-inch rows to 30-inch rows."

"Our first T-L pivot was a used 13-tower, chain-drive unit that I saw advertised in the Omaha newspaper," Wayne recalls. "It was a 1973 model that came from what used to be Traudt Irrigation in Sutton, Nebraska (now Sutton Irrigation), and it had been used on a 160-acre field near Giltner."

"Ernie has been gone several years now, but I still owe a lot of credit to Ernie Traudt for getting us started," he insists. "He asked us how we planned to use the pivot and we told him we wanted to make two 40-

acre pivots out of it. His answer was, 'Well, I've got a pivot point and hydraulic pump you can use for that second one.' So that's how Dad and I got started with T-L center pivots."

With the experience they gained from that first one, Beck says he and his dad, who has since passed, began buying, moving and building even more T-L units. In fact, he says that it got to the point they could dismantle a 10-tower T-L unit to the point it could be transported in as little as three days.

"For a couple years there, Dad and I were bringing home two pivots each winter," Wayne continues. "Most of those were still chain-drive units that farmers had traded in for the new planetary drive machines. Of course, we understood hydraulics and even chain-drive machines were an improvement on what we had."

Today, Wayne and Curtis continue to buy and refurbish used T-L pivots. While a few newer planetary drive machines have been used to replace old chain-drive units, the majority have been installed on land they've added over the years. One year, they even went so far as to turn a 13-tower unit into an 18-tower model, using parts they had on hand from other used models.

"We still have three old T-L units that are chain driven," says Curtis. "However, the rest have either been converted to planetary drive models or replaced altogether. To convert the chain-drive units, we have to cut off some of the old drive system, then weld on new brackets for the planetary drive

pumps and add the tubing," he adds. "But we've been able to convert several of them without too many problems."

Beck says the most recent purchase was a T-L pivot that was installed on 200 acres that the family purchased in 2007. As a result, every acre that the family farms, except for the corners, is now under pivot irrigation, providing corn yields that have continually averaged over 200 bushels per acre.

"With the planetary drives and worm drives that T-L puts on the new units, about all you have to do is go out there and

check the grease in the gearboxes and check the air in the tires," Wayne says. "I have replaced the

seals and rebuilt the planetary drives in a few units," he adds. "But even that has been minor, compared to the amount of work electric units require. It's not that I don't know how to work with electricity, because we're all electric on our wells. But I'd much prefer working with hydraulics and having an electric circuit that I can test with something as simple as a

light bulb if necessary."

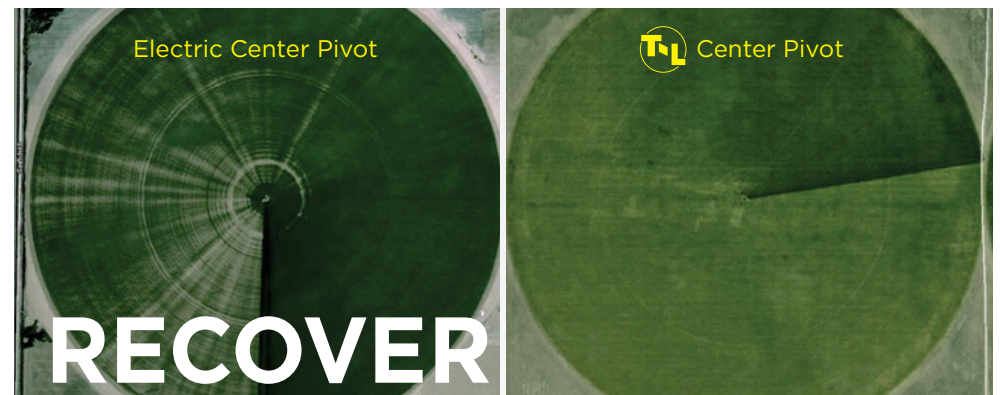
Beck says he also prefers the continuous movement of T-L pivots and the lack of micro-switches that can go bad after a few years.

"You don't have any of that 'herky, jerky' movement as it moves through the field," he grins. "And I think you have to consider the torque it requires to re-start every time it stops on some of these hills."

"I know there are guys who prefer electric pivots who will say, 'Well, at least I don't get my hands dirty working on the pivot,'" he concludes. "I guess my answer would be, 'I don't profess to wear a white shirt when I'm working on equipment'. The important thing is T-L pivots are just plain reliable. And even when they do need some work, they're easier to repair and they're simple to operate." ■

## AT A GLANCE

- Continuous Movement Versus Stop and Start
- T-L Pivots Are Just Reliable
- Easy To Work On If Needed



## Your Lost Production.

Notice the non-uniform water application of the center pivot image on the left. This is known as "spoking," which results from the start-stop operation of an electric drive pivot system. An electric pivot starts and stops 2,880 times a day at the end tower alone. Michigan State University field research (Fusco, 1995) verified the significant effect of "spoking" and found application uniformity ranged from 15% to 85% on a leading manufacturer's electric drive pivot. Call up Google Earth Maps on your computer and see for yourself.



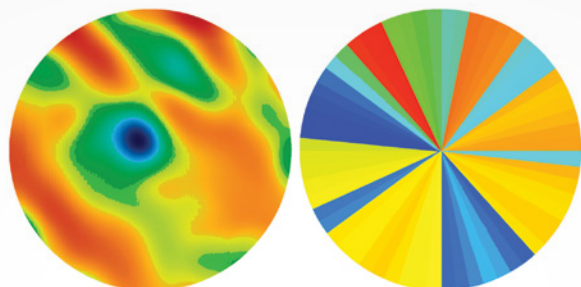
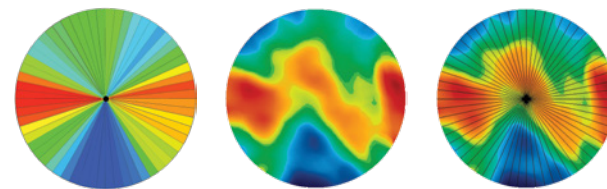
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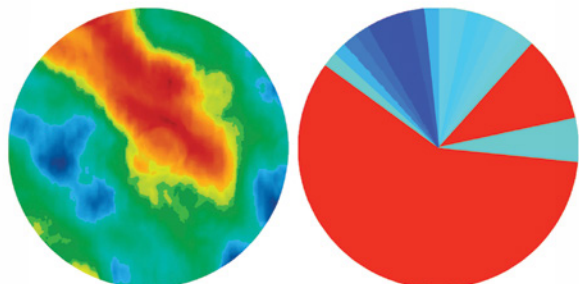


# The Best of Both Worlds

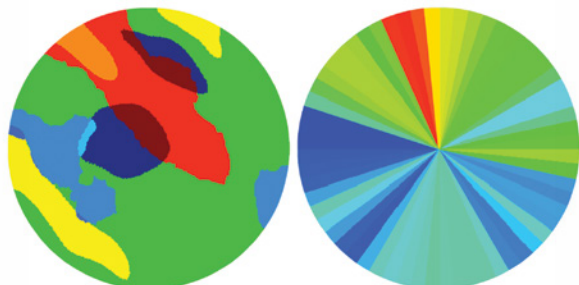
VRI capabilities join hydrostatic drive superiority.



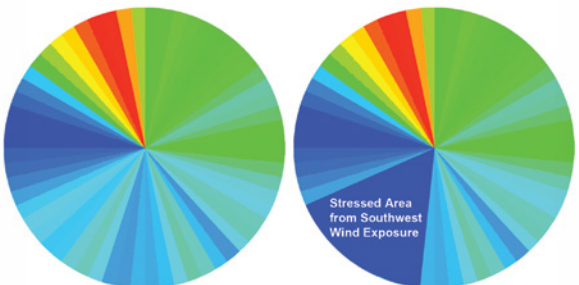
Landscape Change VRI Rx - Spatially Increases Irrigations on the High Ground to Maximize Yields



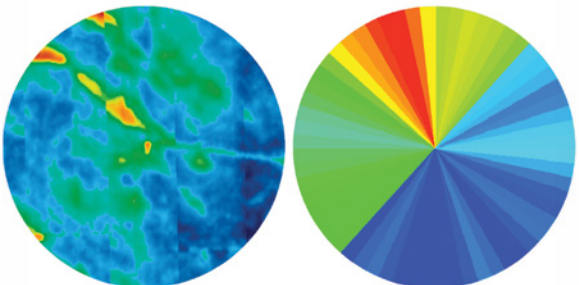
Rain VRI Rx - Targets Irrigations After Rain Events to Only the Driest Soils for One Rotation



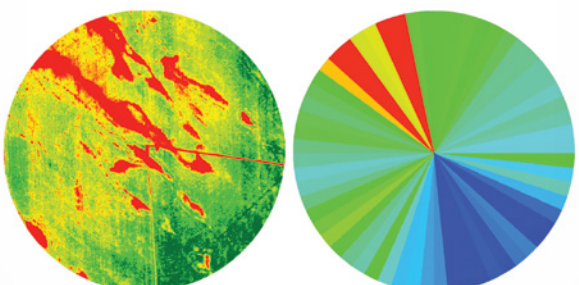
Variable Rate Seeding VRI Rx - Matches Irrigations to Seed Populations from As-Applied VRS Maps



Wind VRI Rx - Real-Time Spatial Irrigation Management that Targets Wind Stressed Areas of the Field



Split Crop VRI Rx - Identifies Highest Yielding Halves of Fields then Optimizes Irrigations by Crop



Imagery VRI Rx - Real-Time Spatial Irrigation Management that Targets Crop Water Deficit Stress

Center pivot irrigation customers can now have the best of both worlds, thanks to the new VRI capabilities of T-L Irrigation products. In effect, producers can reap the benefits of data-driven VRI (variable-rate irrigation) and still retain all the benefits of hydrostatic drive and continuous movement — a market exclusive only available from T-L Irrigation.

“VRI capability is the latest advancement in web-based irrigation management and services to be combined with T-L’s family of pivot management control systems,” says Clark Bauer, Sales Manager for T-L. Developed with Cropmetrics, the Precision Irrigation Management services allow irrigation management via data-driven VRI prescriptions. “The system must be coupled with the Precision Link and Precision Point III (PPC III) Control Panel from T-L. The system not only provides the potential to optimize inputs and increase yields, but allows producers to maximize water and energy efficiency at

the same time. After proper field data is entered the VRI prescription is created and the input to the T-L controls is as simple as one click.”

According to Bauer, customers utilize multiple VRI prescriptions for a host of scenarios, including targeting irrigation after rain events to address the driest soil; optimizing irrigation on the areas with the highest yield potential based on yield monitor mapping, and/or spatially changing irrigation on high ground, light soil areas, heavy soil areas, and takes slope and elevation into consideration. The T-L VRI system includes a one-time VRI prescription application lifetime license.

Data driven precision agriculture with the new VRI offering from T-L Irrigation directly meets the growing needs of today’s managers and owners, allowing them to maximize returns on technology investments and maximizing water efficiency, the most valuable resource to every farmer. ■



## Proven Technology THAT WORKS.

Only T-L Irrigation Systems use strong, efficient, smooth running and reliable hydraulic power that growers use and work with every day. Water is distributed evenly across the crop, eliminating the “spoking” pattern common to the start-stop operation of electrically powered pivot systems, and enhancing your production opportunities. The hydrostatic design also lowers maintenance costs, eliminates high voltage safety concerns and reduces the likelihood of theft. T-L pivot irrigation systems are easier on you, for a lifetime!

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# T-L: The King of Equipment

With more than 300 lakes, 11 major rivers, including the Volga River, and thousands of acres of woods, the Mary El Republic in southeastern Russia is known as one of the most ecologically pure territories in the European part of Russia. It's little wonder the area is a popular destination for travelers and tourists who enjoy nature.

With its long cold winters and warm summers, it's an area best suited for timber production, wood processing and production of meat and milk. Crops, on the other hand are typically limited to barley, oats, rye and wheat, with some vegetables thrown into the mix — particularly in the marshy lowland that lies south of the Volga River in the western part of the territory.

One of the vegetable producers in that area is Anderey Babushkin, who farms near the village of Penyangash. In addition to staples like potatoes, cabbage and onions, Babushkin grows sweet corn, tomatoes, carrots and red beets on 276 hectares (682 acres) of sandy loam soil. Yet, like many farmers in North America, Babushkin finds it hard to produce a quality crop and a consistent yield without irrigation.

"In the past, I had a few hectares under drip irrigation," Babushkin explains. "Mostly it was onions and cabbage; and the results were okay ... but just okay. Every year is different, of course, but in 2010, we had a bad year. There was a drought and the yield from the potatoes was about 16 tons per hectare. In a perfect year, I could get about 30 tons."

However, Babushkin found a better solution to both problems in 2011, when he bought two T-L center pivot units from the

## AT A GLANCE

- 364 hundredweight per acre potatoes
- Higher quality potatoes
- Like the reliability and simplicity
- No Service Problems

APH Group, an agricultural equipment business based in the Netherlands that does business throughout Europe, Asia, northern Africa and Latin America.

"Now I get about 45 tons of potatoes per hectare (364 hundredweight per acre), no matter the year," he adds, referring to his T-L units as "the king of equipment." "The most important thing for me is that I also get higher quality potatoes and the price is better."

Babushkin has since added a third T-L pivot and is now waiting on a fourth, which will put his total acreage under T-L units at 143 hectares (353 acres) or just over half of his farm under center pivot irrigation.

A few miles away near the village of Mitryaev, Alexander Pekunkin and his brothers, Sergey and Nikolay, operate Demetra Farms, where center pivot irrigation is an equally new concept.

"Until we put in the T-L center pivots a couple years ago, we had no experience with pivot irrigation at all," Alexander admits. "At the moment we have six pivots and would like to add more. The problem is water. There is no water left to increase irrigated hectares."

Pekunkin explains that of the 310 hectares (766 acres) the three brothers own, 128 hectares (316 acres) are now irrigated, with potatoes and cabbage



Anderey Babushkin



Alexander Pekunkin

being the primary beneficiaries.

"We realized that it is not possible to grow good vegetables in our region without irrigation," Alexander admits. "We're getting about twice as many potatoes, but the quality is also much higher. Now our potatoes look nice ... all the same size and perfect shape. Before it was terrible."

Both Pekunkin and Babushkin admit it also helps being able to put on fertilizer through the growing season via the pivot. Plus, they both like the simplicity and reliability of T-L pivots, even though it did take some convincing to sell them on something different than everything else on the market.

"We haven't had any service problems since we've had the pivots," Alexander says. "Any service they need we're doing ourselves."

"I do like the reliability and simplicity," Babushkin adds, noting that he, too, is doing his own service. "We haven't had any problems with them at all."

The only challenge either producer has had has been with water supplies. Pekunkin notes that he pumps water from two places in the river, which is about 2-1/2 kilometers (1-1/2 miles) away. One pump is driven by a diesel engine, while two more at the other location are driven by electric pumps.

Babushkin, on the other hand, supplies some of the pivots from the river via a diesel-driven pump, while the others are supplied by a "damp" or well that is powered by an electric pump.

"We had to go electric at the damp since it is close to a village and we are irrigating at night," he explains. "I do not want to disturb people at night."

Naturally, the amount of use and total water application depends on the year and the amount of rainfall they receive during the growing season.

Babushkin says, "If there is no rain and the crop needs water, I'm switching on the pivots and keep on going. My pivots are designed for a six-millimeter (0.24 inch) application rate and do a rotation in 2 to 2-1/2 days. I do have pretty sloppy conditions, though, which is why I can't apply more at one time."

Pekunkin and Babushkin insist that the T-L pivots also make it easier to apply fertilizer and micronutrients during the growing season, when the crops can use it most efficiently. While the amount depends on the crop stage, Babushkin says he will apply anywhere from 50 to 200 kilograms (110 to 441 pounds) of fertilizer per hectare (44 to 178 pounds per acre) through the pivot.

Russia may be half a world away, with the Mary El Republic being even more isolated. Yet, in many ways, Alexander Pekunkin and Anderey Babushkin aren't that much different than the typical American farmer. They appreciate reliable equipment and they welcome the opportunity to increase yields and reap more profit from the crops they produce ... something that T-L pivots deliver on all counts. ■

# “A Center-Pivot Sprinkler Will Raise More Crops With Less Water.”

In Richard Klein's opinion, “Other sprinklers look like tinfoil compared to a T-L. There's just more iron in a T-L, and it appears more solid.”

“Like any machine, even T-Ls may break down in time,” he adds. “However, T-Ls will last longer than any other system on the market. They ‘age’ more gracefully, and they appear to hold their value longer than other center-pivot systems.”

Klein remembers his father commenting about a brother who would always use a 2x2 in place of a 2x4 board. The point, he says: “Maybe it will work. Maybe it's cheaper. But, the 2x4 will last a lot longer. I kind of feel that way about T-L center-pivots.”

Richard farms 480 acres of irrigated alfalfa hay, malt barley, and sugar beets near Pavilion, Wyoming. His farm in the Wind River valley area looks like an oasis located in the midst of a virtual desert.

The explanation: His farm is at 5,400 feet elevation and receives only five to six inches of rainfall in an average year—and barely two inches of moisture annually in the past seven years. He has to apply almost .40 inches of water a day during the growing season.

Klein explains that drought has pushed him more and more toward sprinkler irrigation and he's found that flood irrigation requires almost twice as much water as pivots do. So, he now utilizes 5 T-L systems, varying in size from 2 to 14 towers, to do most of his irrigating.

“I started looking at center-pivots back in 1995 from several

## AT A GLANCE

- Flood irrigation requires twice the water
- Can farm a lot longer using center-pivots
- 480 volts with water “recipe for disaster”
- Didn't need degree in electrical engineering

angles,” Klein says.

“One was an economic decision, since a center-pivot sprinkler will raise more crops with less water. This is even more important when drought cuts the number of acres you can flood irrigate to half or two-thirds of normal. There's just not enough water available.”

“The second was more of a “quality of life” decision. I know my body can farm a lot longer using center-pivots than it can using gated pipe. I'll be able to stay on the farm longer than if I'd had to continue with a flood irrigation system.”

Another reason was his

observation that center-pivot water distribution patterns don't suffer as badly from windy conditions as other

methods of sprinkling.

After deciding to gradually switch to center-pivot usage, it became a matter of which brand to install. As Klein notes, there are three reasons he ended up with T-Ls.

“For one thing, when you first stand under a T-L tower and look up at the valve that adjusts the speed of each tower, the degree of simplicity appeals to me.”

“Once I became familiar with how easy it was to adjust or



Richard Klein (right) and son Garrett - Pavilion, WY

align a T-L with a pair of vice-grip pliers and a 9/16-inch wrench, I was further convinced that hydraulic center-pivots were the way to go.”

“Also, I didn't need a degree in electrical engineering to fix the few problems that arose.”

Klein reports that after he's shown some other farmers how simple T-Ls are to operate, they've all purchased T-Ls.

Further, Klein thought mixing 480 volts with water was a “recipe for disaster.”

“While all center-pivots have problems, I prefer my problems to theirs,” he continues. “I can repair virtually everything that needs work myself, resulting in minimal downtime with a T-L.”

An exception was when a hired man hooked a tower

wheel with a disk-ripper pulled by a 200-horsepower tractor. This accident bent the T-L unit into a sort of corkscrew shape.

The good news was that Keith's T-L dealer was there making repairs just as soon as all the necessary parts were delivered from T-L.

“I think T-L dealers are kind of like the Maytag repairman when it comes to being busy—or rather not busy—doing repair work,” he says.

“They make their money selling complete systems, not servicing and repairing them. That's probably why some dealers of other brands can sell a center-pivot a little cheaper, because they know they're going to be back year-in and year-out.” ■



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# IRRIGATION *Re*-VIEW

Our customers say it best.

It's been four years since Joel Armistead was featured in the T-L Irrigation View; and this Adairville, Kentucky producer still hasn't regretted the purchase of his first T-L pivot in 2008. In fact, he has since installed a towable T-L pivot that he typically starts on corn and moves to soybeans planted behind wheat — effectively producing three crops per season under irrigation.

“We plotted out two pads on each side of our driveway, which allows us to move the pivot between two different fields,” he explains. “It actually ends up being pretty close on timing ... being able to water the corn and then move to the no-till soybeans planted after wheat harvest.”

In the meantime, irrigation has been good to Armistead. Not only did he break the 300-bushel yield barrier for the first time in Kentucky with a 305.9 bushel-per-acre test sample on one of his irrigated fields, but he also won the 2008 National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) Corn Yield Contest in Kentucky. Since that time, he has won the state NCGA competition four more times in two different categories — irrigated and dryland.

LaMoine Smith is another who continues to be pleased with T-L pivots since being featured in Irrigation View.

“The two things that have sold me on T-L through the years are the reliability of T-L machines and the way the company stands behind them,” he says. “T-L is a company with a lot of integrity and they strive to build a machine that will work well for farmers because they are farmers themselves.”

However, Armistead and Smith are just two of the thousands of T-L owners who are sold on T-L. As a general rule, farmers who buy a T-L pivot soon settle for nothing less. ■

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