



CASE IN POINT

- LOCATION:** Friend Family Farms
Havana, Ill.
- SITUATION:**
 - 2,000 acres planted in corn, soybeans, potatoes, green beans, sweet corn, wheat and vegetables
 - 13 Valley® Irrigation machines, four Reinke center pivots
- CHALLENGE:**
 - Fields spread over 20 miles
 - Sandy soil on flat land and hills
 - Unexpected power shutoffs during peak times
 - Two pivot brands in one system
- DEPLOYMENT:**
 - Install Valley ICONX smart panels on nine Valley center pivots and one Reinke center pivot
 - Use AgSense to control and manage center pivots remotely
- EFFECT:**
 - Receive alerts of electrical shutdowns during peak times
 - Save time and fuel by making fewer trips to the field
 - Increase efficiency during planting and harvest
 - Improve accuracy of irrigation

“Non-Tech” Grower Makes Successful Switch to Remote Telemetry

Scott Friend grows a variety of crops on 2,000 acres along the Illinois River near Havana. His land sits on the Mahomet Aquifer, which is the major water source for east-central Illinois. Water is plentiful and irrigation is essential for growing crops on the sandy soil of the Friend farm.

Friend and his brother, Michael, farm together on land they each own, along with some rented land. Together, they irrigate with 13 Valley pivots and four Reinkes. Friend admits that he doesn't get along well with computers or technology, but he jumped into remote telemetry with both feet, converting nine Valley panels and one Reinke panel to Valley ICONX smart panels.

Valley ICONX gives Friend control at the pivot point on a five-inch, full-color touchscreen display. Because ICONX is equipped with AgSense® ICON Link, he can control all of his center pivots using one remote management platform.

Including a different brand of pivot in the network has been no problem for Friend.

“With ICONX, the Reinke operates exactly the same as Valley machines,” he says. “I’ve had no problems with it being a different brand. It’s worked flawlessly.”

Moving Forward and Reducing Hassle

“The electric company had boxes of their own installed on our pivots so they could cut power during peak times,” Friend explains. “Those boxes are now obsolete and were breaking down, so I’m getting ahead of the curve by deciding to install the Valley ICONX panels. I can use remote telemetry to shut the systems down on peak days and plan my irrigation timing better.”

When the weather gets hot, the power company has the option to shut off electricity to the center pivots. AgSense now provides Friend with a notification every time that happens, and he can set his center pivots to restart when peak time is over.

“I don’t have to go out there late at night, restarting pivots,” he says. “Valley ICON cut lots of time off for me.”

Being a self-proclaimed “non-tech” guy, Friend knew he would face a learning curve when he switched to Valley ICONX. Even so, the transition went smoothly, and now he says he actually likes using smart technology to control his pivots remotely.

“I enjoy it,” he says, “even in the field. When I’m out working, I don’t have to stop what I’m doing to move the system. I can do it from my phone in my tractor. That speeds up planting in the spring and working the ground in the fall.”



More Efficient Use of Resources

Friend’s fields are spread out, the farthest being about 20 miles away. He says AgSense saves him many trips to the fields, resulting in less gas consumption, fewer miles on his truck, and significant time savings.

“The first thing I do in the morning is check to see what’s happening with the pivot that’s farthest away,” he says. “I don’t have to drive 20 miles each way to check on one irrigation machine – I can just look at my phone. It saves gas and miles on my truck.”

Friend says he also sees water savings from getting water on ground that needs it and not watering where it’s unnecessary.

“For example, I’m sitting in a 40-acre field right now that is half-sandy, while the other half is good, flat land,” he says. “The panel is a quarter mile away from the pivot, and I can’t always time my day to get there and adjust it. With AgSense, I have my pivot set to go across the sandy half, and then go back over it with a double shot of water. I can skip the other half for a day or two. I don’t have to water the entire circle when it isn’t needed.”

Advice for Fellow Growers

Friend plans to install Valley ICONX smart panels on his remaining pivots over the next couple of years, and he recommends ICONX to his fellow growers.

“If I could tell other farmers one thing, it would be to try using a smart panel on one system that’s farther away,” he says. “You’ll see the full effect of what it will save you – time, fuel, water. It’s not cheap, but you can see how it helps you in the long run. Give it a try. You’ll probably find they’re worth it.”