



CASE IN POINT

- LOCATION:** Duane Johnson Farm  
Saunders County, Neb.
- SITUATION:**
  - Farmland spread over 300 square miles
  - 70% irrigated with a variety of center pivot brands
- CHALLENGE:** Control and monitor all pivots at a distance
- DEPLOYMENT:**
  - BaseStation3™ with Wi-Fi and cellular backup
  - 2014: Began testing BaseStation3 on four pivots
  - 2016: Expand use of BaseStation3 on six
- EFFECT:**
  - Immense time savings
  - Control from miles away
  - Less worry and bother
  - Fuel savings and vehicle wear

Controlling Pivots Across Miles

When it comes to farming, Duane Johnson covers a lot of ground. He works his own land, his extended family’s land and neighboring land for several absentee owners. In all, he farms 300 square miles in an area that extends 20 miles wide and 15 miles long.

More than 70 percent of all of the acres Johnson farms are irrigated, and that creates challenges. Some of the irrigation machines are more than 40 years old, and they are a variety of brands. Many are miles away from his home, and a few are in difficult to reach areas.

All of them need to be controlled and monitored, so Johnson uses Valley® BaseStation3™ to support his farm’s irrigation plan.

“I can control my pivots from absolutely anywhere,” he says. “It saves me hours of time. I don’t have to worry so much. I save the wear and tear on my vehicles and save miles too.”

Time Is On My Side

Driving to check on center pivots was time consuming, and Johnson believes that on a normal day BaseStation3 saves him at least an hour a day per pivot, plus gas and labor.

“BaseStation3 alerts me if a pivot has stopped because of an issue or obstacle. Without that knowledge, chances are it would be hours or even an entire day before I would know about it, and I’d waste precious hours instead of moving forward,” he explains. “With BaseStation3, I can take care of any issue immediately and improve water efficiency as well.”

Johnson appreciates that he can remotely move pivots when he’s out planting, spraying or harvesting. During irrigation season, he can pick up his smartphone and start the pivots back up again when he finishes working in a field.



“It probably seems lazy to people who have never dealt with breakdowns, mechanical situations or just plain need to move a pivot at the right moment,” Johnson says. “But not having to go to the pivot point just saves me so much time and hassle,” Johnson says. “It’s so handy, and I don’t have to stop what I’m doing to take care of my pivots. It’s another improvement that equates to time savings.”



### Diminished Concern

Johnson says he isn’t as tied to his irrigation machines now that he uses BaseStation3.

“Instead of jumping out of bed at 2 a.m. to drive out and check on my pivots, I can roll over and check my phone,” he says. “I know where the pivots are, and I know if I can wait until morning to handle anything that comes up. It’s peace of mind, and it’s hard to put a value on the sense of security that offers.”

Plus, he’s added the luxury of spending more time with his family. BaseStation3 let’s Johnson check his pivots wherever he is; he doesn’t have to quit spraying fields, leave his son’s baseball game or stop whatever he’s doing.

Simply stated, Johnson is no longer distracted, wondering what’s going on with his irrigation equipment when he’s out of sight.

### Saving Gas and Crops

With such a large area to cover, Johnson appreciates any time he can avoid spending in the truck and any money he can save on gas. He no longer has to drive out to each pivot point every time he wants to start or stop his machines.

“I haven’t done the calculations, but of course I’m saving gas money every day,” he says.

By using BaseStation3 to control his machines, Johnson is also avoiding crop damage.

“I have a couple of machines that I can’t reach without a four-wheeler,” explains Johnson. “Not only is that time consuming, but I also knock down crop when I’m driving out there and back. I don’t have to drive out there nearly as often now, which safeguards those crops.”

### A Multi-faceted Solution

Johnson started testing BaseStation3 for Valley during the 2014 growing season using cellular service.

This makes the farm more efficient and more technologically proficient.

BaseStation3 also ties together all the farm’s center pivots, regardless of brand. Johnson uses it on his Valley pivots, but he also installed Valley control panels on three of his Zimmatic pivots to gain greater control by connecting them to the BaseStation3 network.

“It works great on all the machines, not just Valley,” Johnson said. “And it’s just going to keep making my life easier as we add more equipment to the network.”

“I’m really pleased with it. It’s hard to put numbers on the time and worry it saves me, but I can tell you I’m looking forward to using it on more pivots this year and making my life just a bit easier everyday.”