



CASE IN POINT

- LOCATION:** Warbington Farms
Dooly County, Ga.
- SITUATION:**
 - Three-generation family farm
 - Monitoring and controlling more than 80 pivots of various brands and age
- CHALLENGE:**
 - Embracing new technology to improve operations
 - Adapting operations for the younger generation
 - Simplifying pivot control and management
- DEPLOYMENT:**
 - Replacing older competitive pivots with new Valley pivots featuring ICON smart panels
 - Using Wi-Fi Access and ICON Link to control pivots and pumps
 - Exploring methods to bring more pivots into one network
- EFFECT:**
 - Increased flexibility
 - Control at the pivot, at the edge of the field and remotely
 - No more damaged crops from driving to the pivot point
 - Time and money savings

Tech-savvy family farm implements new ICON10

Warbington Farms lies mostly in Dooly County in Central Georgia. It's a family farm, with three generations working the land together to grow cotton, peanuts and corn. They've always been early adopters of new technology, and that has helped them continue to succeed, even during down times.

Austin Warbington, who is the third generation of Warbingtons, along with his cousin and another cousin's husband, says he's fortunate to have this opportunity.

"It's nice working with my family every day," he says. "We all get along, and everybody works hard."

The Warbingtons started irrigating in the early 90s, using mostly Zimmatic® pivots, with some Olson and Reinke® as well. They began making the switch to Valley pivots a few years ago, when they first worked with Reid Brothers Irrigation out of Unadilla, Ga.

"It was really Blake Reid who got us to switch, because he is such a knowledgeable guy," Warbington says. "We acquired a farm that had Valley equipment on it, and he came out to troubleshoot. We've been working with him and buying Valley ever since."

"And I'm glad we did," he adds, "because we've had more success with Valley equipment than any of our other pivots. The gearboxes are more dependable, the technology works better, and Blake provides excellent service. Any cost difference is totally worth it."

It was because of that relationship that Reid wanted the Warbingtons to be among the first to test the new premiere smart panel, the Valley ICON10.

The ICON10 boasts an extremely user-friendly, 10-inch full-color touchscreen at the pivot point. Every ICON10 has AgSense®, a smart irrigation solution from Valley, built in, so growers can control their pivots through the ICON Link on their smartphones, tablets or desktop.

“The Warbingtons are a progressive bunch and they look at things differently,” says Reid. “We’re fortunate they switched to Valley, and we try to take good care of them. I knew they would be willing to try something new, because they like to have the latest and greatest on their farm. ICON10 is definitely that.”



Simple remote control

Warbington also got the optional Wi-Fi Access with his ICON10, which lets him manage and control his pivot from almost anywhere in the field with the ICON app. During his first season with the ICON10, Warbington decided to use that option the most.

“The app is flawless, as far as I can see,” Warbington says. “It shows me exactly what I’d see on the screen at the pivot point. It’s really impressive, and it was a real luxury to me, because I don’t have to run over the crop to get to the pivot to control it,” he says. “It’s especially nice when it’s been raining, and I want to turn the pivot off. I don’t have to drive out on muddy roads to do it. It just makes sense.”

Warbington says his dad Teel and uncle Jim are even more tech savvy than he is, and are quite particular about technology.

“It’s very rare that my dad isn’t critical of new equipment,” says Warbington. “He’s run just about every type of panel and pivot there is, and he had no negative comments about the ICON10 at all. That’s unusual.”

“My granddaddy likes to work right at the panel, and he can do that well, too. It’s so easy to read and understand.”

Warbington laughs, adding, “Plus, I can check it with the phone after he’s done working on it.”

More remote management in the future

Warbington Farms is already familiar with remote telemetry, as they’ve been using AgSense for the last five years on one of their farms, which they completely automated. Because they recognize the value of that service, they plan to implement more remote management over the next few years.

For example, they are installing a new Valley pivot in the spring, complete with another ICON10 smart panel. While they’ll plan to have the option of Wi-Fi Access on this one, they plan to use remote telemetry to manage it.

“The main thing is to control it remotely,” Warbington says. “While the Wi-Fi feature has great range, we’ll manage our pivots that are farther away with AgSense. We have about 80 pivots to manage, so it’s a lot to cover. We’ll be replacing some of our older pivots with Valley, and every new one will include an ICON10 panel.”

Reid says the Warbingtons hope to eventually bring competitor pivots and those with mechanical panels into the same network by installing some Valley ICONX panels on them as well. The ICONX works by taking control of any existing pivot panel using that panel’s circuits. It’s compatible with all major pivot and panel brands, so growers can gain complete and simple control from one source.

“They’ve been looking at implementing variable rate irrigation in more fields, and the ICONX makes it more viable for them,” Reid explains. “It’s something we’re exploring, just to give them better control.”

“Anytime I can avoid a trip out to the pivot point is time saved,” says Warbington. “With all the options we have with our ICON10, we can run the pivots however we want. It gives us real flexibility, and it’s extremely easy to use. I’m a big fan.”