

## Case IH AFS autoguidance working with Google Earth

**P**recision agriculture techniques are becoming more advanced and more appealing, with an ever increasing number of farmers turning to precision ag to boost productivity and lower input costs, says Case IH Marketing Manager Stuart Brown.

New innovations are making it easier for farmers to move into precision agriculture. For example, the latest Case IH AFS Pro auto guidance system will allow operators to set guidance paths from Google Earth Coordinates. “The machine does not even need to have been in the field when the guidance lines are set up. Farmers can set up their guidance lines from their living rooms, and contractors can set them up before they even get to the farm, and can run multiple machines on the same guidance pattern,” Stuart says.

Meanwhile, local Case IH dealerships are helping farmers access the highest levels of precision by establishing their own Real Time Kinematic (RTK) base station networks. An RTK base station can deliver 2cm accuracy, compared with 10cm accuracy from a satellite subscribed signal.

Victorian Case IH dealer JJ O’Connor & Sons was the first to install its own RTK network of this capacity.

O’Connors had installed about 50 stations by January this year. “Other dealers are also setting up their own RTK networks, including our WA dealers who are purchasing a system that already has a coverage area of over 400 square kilometers,” Stuart says.

“Other networks are being developed by our dealers in the Eyre Peninsula and Saddleworth regions in South Australia and in the north west of New South Wales.”

Stuart says the advent of Google Earth compatible guidance systems and the establishment of local RTK systems is just the beginning. “Over time, operators will become process managers more than machinery operators as farming practices become more automated.

“We’ll see changes to farming practice like an increase in night spraying, which allows farmers to take advantage of lower wind conditions, because autoguidance means visibility will no longer be an issue.

“These kinds of productivity advantages are a major factor driving the growth of the precision agriculture market. We’re also expecting to see a huge uptake of autoguidance products in the next few years as farmers realise that automation is a useful tool to combat the labour and skills shortage.”

