

## 2011 InfoAg Conference Update

The 2011 InfoAg Conference does not disappoint those who are involved with agricultural GIS, field mapping, data management and the latest technologies. From ag apps for iPad and smartphones to remote sensing imagery analysis and direct links from the cab to the office, this conference is not about the iron, but the core of precision ag which is, was and ever shall be about the information. This blog post is a snapshot of the things I learned on Day 1.

1. Variable rate seeding has been a hot topic for the last couple of seasons and we are seeing widespread interest in the Ontario market. As we develop the tools to do this the biggest question remains: Based on What Criteria? Our speakers Ron Heiniger and Tim Smith highlighted the various properties that need to be considered from hybrid selection, water availability, fertility and risk. Most of these considerations are quantifiable and measurable productivity indicators that can be both measured and mapped in an ag GIS. Both speakers discussed the importance of having test plots within any VR seeding field to be able to benchmark against traditional rates and to understand the high/low responses within each individual field. My take on the subject is having a plan, having measurable data and having a yield monitor are crucial elements in addition to software that can both house the data and handle the post season analysis.
2. No one can escape a gadgets and gizmos topic at this year's venues. In this case we were treated to researchers Philip Rasmussen and Chod Stephens' experiences finding good resources for rugged computing (they highly recommend the Juniper systems line and love the MESA), reliable power supply sources, any device that has a camera that can geocode and various compact GPS units. They shared some good points of comparison between smartphones and tablets with Android vs iOS vs windows vs HP operating systems.
3. Ted Macy shared his newest upcoming release AgStudio which will replace his Easy Suite software. As one the grandfathers of agricultural GIS applications, his vision for the newest technology as well as his breadth of experience were a treat to hear in person. His hosted database solutions take on a twist from some other products with his focus on the enduser, the ability to customize and include even the most complex dynamic in an interface that users of many stipes can use. The exhibitors pulled out all stops to showcase their best methods for handling DATA!

I can sum up the theme of the show as tools for connectivity (field to office), capability (having data to deliver to the field) and communication (from RTK accuracy to all kinds of on board computing). As an attendee I have culled a long list of great new opportunities to bring home to my customers. Stay tuned.

*Karon*