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POSTSEASON PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

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Another year of crop irrigation is in the books and although you are ready for a well-deserved break, you do not want to overlook important end-of-season maintenance for your irrigation system. Prepping your system for the drastic winter temperature changes and other harsh conditions is as significant as the time you devote to conducting regular growing season crop monitoring.

To implement postseason maintenance and winterization of the system, Reinke Manufacturing encourages you to follow a systematic checklist to prevent overlooking critical upkeep steps, which will prevent costly repairs and increase the life of your system.

“Proper postseason service and winterization is critical to the longevity of your irrigation systems.”
— Todd Merryman, Reinke Manufacturing, Past Manager of Technical Services

Postseason maintenance/winterization checklist:

1. Verify all water is drained from the system.
 - a. This is done by draining the water supply line and underground (if possible) and draining the bottom elbow at the pivot center. Check the function of the automatic low-pressure water drains located on the bottom of the span pipe connections at each tower. Remember that there may be additional low-pressure drains on special applications, such as the swing arm hinge joint. On Reinke irrigation systems, the drains are a special rubber plug that can be manipulated by pushing on them in an upward motion. On the last tower, remove the sand trap, dump any contents including water and reinstall the sand trap once all contents are removed.
2. Inspect the drivetrain at each tower location.
 - a. At each gearbox, drain water condensation and then fill the lubricant to the proper level. Check tire condition and adjust tire pressure (PSI) to the value recommended in owner's manual.
3. Adjust location of irrigation system.
 - a. Park the irrigation system parallel with the prevailing winter winds to help reduce the chance of wind damage.
 - b. Take extra time now to close all wheel tracks so the fresh fill will firm up during the winter months and you will be ready to easily move the system when irrigation season begins.
 - c. Park the system on a smooth surface out of



Verify that all water is drained from the system.

existing wheel tracks. Deep ruts can act as an anchor and prevent any necessary sideways tower movement. Cold temperatures can reduce the overall length of the irrigation system by shrinking it several inches. When the system is not allowed to relieve the stress because of being parked in ruts or uneven surface, structural damage may occur.

4. Protect system from livestock.
 - a. If you will be grazing livestock on the field during the offseason, take steps to protect the pivot center, electrical service, and tower drivetrain components. Damage may occur if livestock can rub against or touch these critical components.
5. Waterproof electrical elements.
 - a. Power cords, electrical plugs, and receptacles should be protected with waterproof covers and hung up off the ground.

Why is this? Because there can be variations in winterization from system to system. Managing all irrigation systems, in the same manner, may result in unexpected maintenance when Spring arrives. Season-ending maintenance can primarily be conducted by the farmer, yet, pre-growing season maintenance will require professional service by factory trained certified technicians. Reinke dealers are available for your comprehensive service needs, year-round.

“The importance for farmers to consult their owner’s manual for winterization instructions and procedures specific to the system you have in service cannot be emphasized enough.”

– Todd Merryman, Reinke Manufacturing, Past Manager of Technical Services

Offseason is also prime time to review your system’s performance. Review yield maps to improve irrigation design, maintenance, and management, compare irrigated and non-irrigated yields to determine future irrigation investment and prepare a list of items to be repaired. Conducting a system performance review allows you to pencil out when repair costs or upgrades become more costly than purchasing a new system. If a system purchase is in your future, waiting until preseason to identify your needs, may not allow you time to get the new pivot up and running, or time to work out financing or payment. Plan ahead for purchases, upgrades and maintenance to reduce stress on you and your crop.



Park your pivot parallel with the winter winds and close all wheel tracks.



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