

The 'Gator Paper




End of Season Maintenance To Do List

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 post-season 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.

Year-end maintenance/winterization checklist:

1) Verify all water is drained from the system—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 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 which 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.

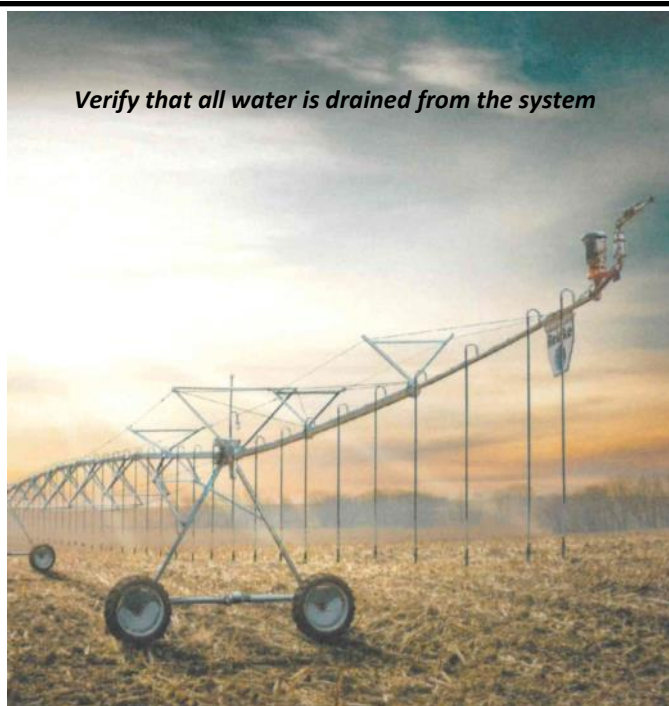
2) Inspect the drive train at each tower location—At each gear box, drain water condensation and then fill the lubricant to the proper level. Check tire condition and adjust tire pressure (PSI) to the value recommended in owner's manual.

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 over the winter months and you will be ready to easily move system when irrigation season begins.

Verify that all water is drained from the system



c. Park the system on a smooth surface out of 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 on uneven surface, structural damage may occur.

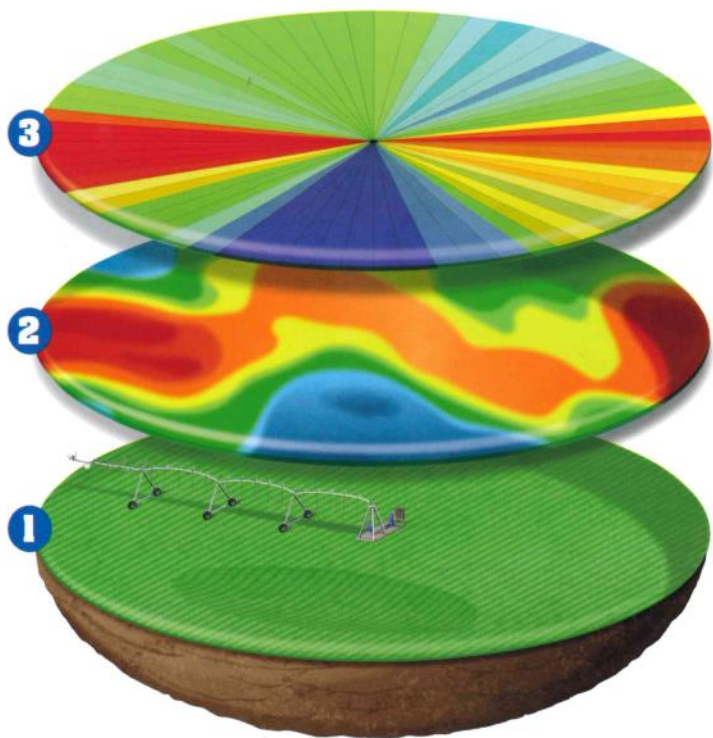
4) Protect system from livestock—If you will be grazing livestock on the field during the off-season, take steps to protect the pivot center, electrical service, and tower drive train components. Damage may occur if livestock can rub up against or touch these critical components.

5) Waterproof electrical elements—Power cords, electrical plugs, and receptacles should be protected with waterproof covers and hung up off the ground.

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Notes from the Service Desk

As another season comes to a close, I would like to take a minute to discuss the importance of preparing your pivots for the approaching season... Winter...

Properly drained systems will cost less and start up easier in the spring. When you finish watering for the season some things to remember include your sand trap and any above ground water trapped in the system. At the end of the system is a trap with sand and water that needs to be dumped. Open all valves at the well and riser. The weather can turn quickly and the underground blow out can be pushed back, however all above ground plumbing is susceptible to freezing and thawing conditions. As the fall approaches, we all gear up for the busy long hours of harvest, take a minute and prepare your irrigator for the off season before it's too late.

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