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No More Secrets about GPS Spray Control!

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It is no longer a secret what effect GPS spray controls can have on the management of turf. In 2012, early adopters had the idea that on-screen guidance and individual nozzle control would yield an unknown amount of chemical savings based on a diminished amount of over sprayed areas. What these early adopters soon found out was that there were several other solutions for legacy management challenges that GPS spray control systems could address.

One of the largest benefits revealed was an increase in productivity; how to get spray applications done in a timely manner without disrupting play. As an example, let's say a common golf course fairway spray application takes two machines, two spray technicians, and eight hours to complete. With GPS and dual nozzle control, that same amount of work could be done by one machine, one spray tech, and in six hours. I know it's hard to believe, but it's also hard to overlook! Especially knowing the sizable cost of an extra sprayer and scarcity of finding extra spray technicians.

Another valuable factor for GPS sprayers is in the mapping and recording of spray jobs. Being able to see and track exactly where spray chemicals have been applied is a huge benefit. A Superintendent might ask their crew, 'How did it go?' and the immediate response might be, 'All good! Everything got sprayed.' But did it? Within a few days, disease or insect activity might start to show up where the turf wasn't sprayed as reported. Collars may start to turn brown where the overspray of PGR's has knocked it so hard that it needs life support. It can also happen where a neighboring homeowner might claim that spray technicians cruised across their lawn and killed their begonias! With GPS spray control systems, having a report of exactly what and where chemical has been applied can be a very valuable tool for quickly resolving the dispute. There is also the reality of regulatory oversight and the need to provide spray application data upon request. Having a fully detailed map and application data electronically available will impress any regulatory auditor.

Having diverse grasses on collars creates an aesthetic that some golfers like, but managing growth with plant growth regulators (PGRs) can be almost impossible with full 4 nozzle boom sections. There is constant overlapping of potentially the wrong PGR on the wrong grass type. No matter what, something is either going to get over sprayed or under sprayed. And how do you train an operator to make those decisions on what side to error? GPS systems can take the error opportunity down to a 20" or even 10" resolution vs. an 80" error.

Perhaps the most appreciated feature is that GPS spray control systems can automatically control each individual nozzle during a spray application based on mapping. The GPS system turns nozzles on and off automatically, letting the operator focus more on piloting the sprayer. This can be especially important around small areas like greens and tees on a golf course. Training someone to spray small areas manually with a conventional sprayer can take a lot of time and will yield many mistakes. Training to use automatic GPS controlled sprayers is very minimal, and the applications will be more precise and efficient. Considering the more tech savvy pool of potential spray techs, it is easier to attract the best candidates by giving them the automated functions of GPS spray control.

We can't dispute the environmental impact that golf courses have on our landscape. Urban, suburban, or rural. These are environmental gems that provide green space for whole communities, not just the players of the game. Because of this, we are charged with minimizing waste and overall inputs while still maintaining quality turf.

If there is a big secret about GPS spray control systems, the secret is 17%! The running average of spray product savings reported by GPS spray control system customers over the last ten years is 17%. Added up year after year, the case is already made, GPS spray control pays back! And it helps turf managers be more accurate, efficient, and responsible.

Frost Inc. provides advanced spray technology products and services for the *golf and turf care industry*. Frost leads the market in GPS spray control systems and variable rate mapping services. Other popular products include full-package application equipment, chemical handling systems, and a variety of unique and upcoming technology products including a *first-of-it's-kind*, Autonomous Sprayer! Our goal is to make spraying more accurate, more efficient, and a safer experience for your team! Let us make your spray day a better day!

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