

# CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

## South Dakota Farmer Streamlines Planting with Trimble CenterPoint RTX Correction Service



Michael Stevens is a corn and soybean farmer in South Dakota. He farms 1800 acres with his dad in the southeast corner of the state, about a half hour from Sioux Falls. An early technology adopter or 'experimenter' as he calls himself, Stevens began using location and GPS technology on his farm about 10 years ago. He began by hooking up a GPS receiver to the top of his combine in order to create harvest maps. This not only saved time when it came to harvest, it also saved seed and fertilizer.

Looking to gain greater planting efficiency and production, Stevens again turned to GPS machine control technology. Unfortunately his initial choice in a GPS provider led to frustration. Stevens experienced a serious problem with signal loss on his receiver which resulted in a lot of downtime and unnecessary stress.

*"To start with, when I would lose signal my sprayer would shut off and I would get a bunch of static from my dad," said Stevens. "When you're using systems like this, every time you lose a signal it takes 30 minutes to an hour to lock in again. And with my old system, at about 6:00 p.m., we'd lose signal and steering would get really inaccurate."*

Fed up, in 2011 Stevens selected the high-accuracy Trimble® CenterPoint™ RTX™ Correction Service, from his Trimble Ag reseller, Sioux International Inc. Available worldwide, the GPS- and GLONASS-enabled correction service is delivered via cellular communications using the Trimble DCM-300 modem. The service is currently certified for use in 38 countries on five continents.

Stevens believes CenterPoint RTX is ideal because minimal equipment is needed. It does not require a base station and it uses a greater range of satellites to offer 1.5 inch repeatable accuracy. By being both GPS and GLONASS compatible, the system combines all satellites working together to deliver more reliable location data. Corrections are delivered directly to his Trimble AG-372 GNSS receiver. Stevens runs the service on his Case IH Advanced Farming System (AFS) integrated display inside his Case IH tractor.

*"The primary reasons I selected Trimble are the accuracy of the correction service and machine start up time," said Stevens. "The width of my soybean rows is only 22 inches, so 3 feet of accuracy is just not enough," said Stevens. "On my planter with Trimble, I can get within an inch of where I'm aiming, or darn close."*

This added precision with CenterPoint RTX gives Stevens much higher accuracy when using his White™ planter. He eliminates skips and overlaps in his rows, and by reducing row spacing to 22 inches, Stevens can increase yields and reduce weeds. Plus, Stevens believes the CenterPoint RTX service helps to lessen operator fatigue. While it's primarily a convenience factor, he's not as tired at the end of the day and can leave the fields a little quicker.

Trimble's high accuracy correction service also allows Stevens to focus his time making sure his planter is working correctly instead of following a marker on the ground. This allows him to identify and fix problems before they start, which translates into significant time and money saved. He's also experienced more uniform spacing during planting and a more uniform emergence of plants, which lead to larger yields.

*"You can't make sure your planter is functioning properly while you're staring at a marker in the dirt," said Stevens. "Now I can make sure my fertilizer shoot is working, overlapping areas are covered correctly before the section turns off, and nothing is plugged. You can't do that looking at a marker all day every day."*

Overplanting and under planting in his "point rows" is also no longer a problem with Trimble. With tighter rows and fewer overlaps, Stevens can optimize these sections where shorter and shorter rows have been planted because of the orientation of his piece of land.

Instead of waiting 30 minutes to an hour to locate a signal, CenterPoint RTX instead takes a few minutes to lock in the signal. And, even if a connection signal is lost, the CenterPoint RTX system offers more uptime with two minutes of continuing availability. After running CenterPoint RTX for about a year, Stevens has only lost a signal once. He estimates this reliability and accuracy has saved him several hours a week that were once wasted waiting for his systems to reboot.

Stevens believes the real ROI for the correction service comes not from having more accurate location points and data, but from what he can actually do with the information. With more precision guiding his planter, Stevens is confident he's saving money on seed and gaining yield in those planted areas.

*"The correction service from Trimble is really making my other equipment do what it's supposed to do, making everything tie together more efficiently," said Stevens. "The biggest feedback I can give to the dealership or to other farmers thinking about getting this is it's as close to bulletproof as you can get."*

For more information about Trimble CenterPoint RTX service, contact your local reseller.