

Grow

HANDS-OFF IRRIGATION CONTROL

SENSORS AND TRANSMITTERS
ALLOW DATA-BASED IRRIGATION
MANAGEMENT

FARMERS WHO prefer a hands-off approach to irrigation control can look to companies such as Stevens Water Monitoring Systems, which introduced an automated soil moisture sensor called the Hydra Probe for use by USDA researchers in 1995. That soil-sensing device measured soil moisture, conductivity and temperature.

Today the \$324 Hydra Probe is available to farmers and is compatible with several types of irrigation systems. Its advanced electronics and programming make it smarter than a soil probe, collecting data on up to 10 parameters relevant to soil conditions in and below the crop root zone. The data can read on site via a data logger that accepts a short-range Bluetooth signal, or via a longer-range radio signal back at the farm office. No calibration is required.

The Hydra Probe also can transmit to a personal computer where the information can be represented graphically and even compared with satellite imagery data that show crop stress or soil surface conditions.

Another Stevens products, the high data rate transmitter model GHT, was recently certified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for use with the



Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) Data Collection System.

The transmitter, which sells for \$1,695, allows for an irrigation system to access NOAA real-time data about existing and approaching weather conditions. The data can be used for turning off irrigation water if a storm system is in the area, for instance. It works with any computer software using menu-driven commands. Customers can program their irrigation systems to react to specific NOAA data. Stevens provides an online GOES data reception, management and analysis service at www.goeslink.com.

For more information, contact Stevens Water Monitoring Systems, 5465 S.W. Western Ave., Suite F, Beaverton, OR 97005, 503/469-8000, visit www.stevenswater.com or www.freeproductinfo.net/fin, or circle 195.