

# Chilean Farm Adds Pivot Irrigation and Watches Sugar Beet Yields Grow



*Sugar beet yields have increased 40 tons with the introduction of pivot irrigation at Agrícola La Selva.*

Zimmatic pivots are helping sugar beet growers in the southern hemisphere significantly increase yields while also saving labor costs and conserving water.

Pedro Nickelsen Dessy, CEO of Agrícola La Selva Ltd., a family-owned farm 600 km (373 miles) south of Santiago, Chile, has seen the benefits firsthand – through improved water efficiency, increased yield and ease of operation. Nine Zimmatic pivots are used to irrigate. Water comes from a channel matrix and is supplied by a river that crosses the field.

“This irrigation system is enabling us to continue to cultivate beets,” Nickelsen Dessy says. “Our water needs are 20 cm (7.87 inches) per month, which is entirely feasible with this equipment.”

Agrícola La Selva’s pivots also water some of the farm’s other crops, in a strict crop rotation. After the beets, the pivots irrigate oats, wheat and canola. The farm uses pivots on potatoes and corn as well, totaling about 2,500 ha (6,178 acres). The rest of the operation features 160 ha (395 acres) of fruit, including blueberries, apples and cherries.

Growers at Agrícola La Selva have seen yields increase significantly with the introduction of pivot irrigation.

“In 10 years, between 1994 and 2004, our average beet yield was 60 MT/ha (26.75 tons per acre). When we installed the pivots, performance rose to 100 MT/ha (44.6 tons per acre),” Nickelsen Dessy says. “This 40-ton difference corresponds to 20 tons due to the irrigation system, and another 20 tons due to improved seed technology, nutrition and soil structure.”

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**“The pivots are efficient, economical and easy to operate.”**

– Pedro Nickelsen Dessy

Each one of Agricola La Selva's pivots is monitored using the FieldNET™ web-based irrigation management and control system. FieldNET saves the farm water by pausing irrigation in the large gaps between crops, and it saves labor when other tasks require the growers' attention.

"FieldNET is very helpful for the efficient management of our pivots, especially when we are very busy with the rest of the tasks of harvesting fruits and cereals," Nickelsen Dessy says. "It has allowed us to have a statistical background on the irrigation operation; without this, we

would have no telemetry. We have power outages quite often. With FieldNET, we know what has been watered."

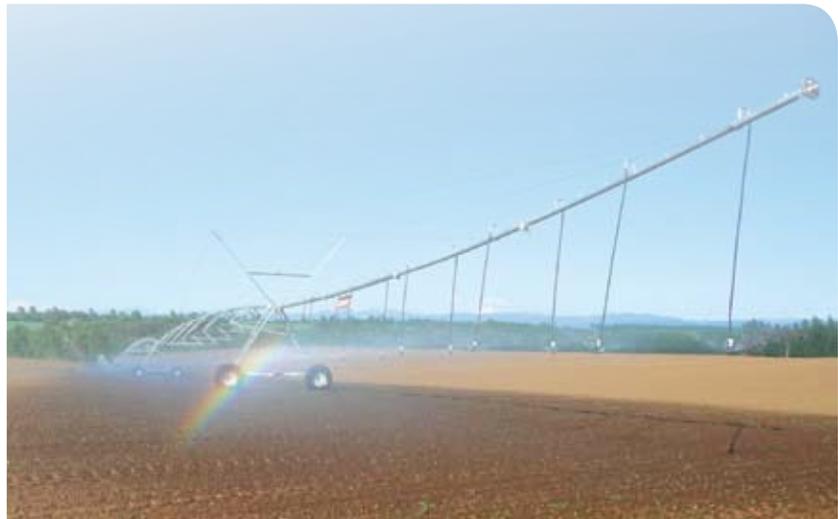
"For us, the pivots have been a great tool," Nickelsen Dessy says. "They are efficient, economical and easy to operate."

*Editor's Note: Since this article was originally published in 2011, Agricola La Selva has decided to add two new Zimmatic pivots to the farm. The new pivots will bring an additional 96 hectares into irrigated production.*

## FAST FACTS

### AGRICOLA LA SELVA LTD.

- Family-owned
- Located 600 km (373 miles) south of Santiago, Chile
- 2,500 ha (6,178 acres) of pivot-irrigated land
- Water requirements total 20 cm (7.87 inches) per month
- Pivots irrigate sugar beets, potatoes and corn. Operation also grows blueberries, apples and cherries.



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– Pedro Nickelsen Dessy

SOURCE: Agricola La Selva Ltd. and Lindsay Corp.

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