

## Final Report

Vanderweele Farms was awarded a 2009 Alaska Agriculture Innovative Grant for Trimble Ag GPS Autopilot with RTK. This system greatly increased our level of precision farming with its automated tractor steering system.

The Trimble guidance products we purchased were able to help us complete field applications faster and more productively, accurately, safely and comfortably with less operator fatigue. We were able to complete our potato planting 25% faster using this GPS system. We now have 2 years of data stored in the system for future analysis.

With the help of the Matanuska Susitna School District, we created a GPS network including a base station mounted on Palmer High School. During the installation process, photographs were taken by the UAF Cooperative Extension Service. The base station is now operational and can be used by others interested in investing in this technology. This infrastructure is now in place for the benefit of all growers.

The AAIG helped us purchase the first GPS unit. We found it to be so beneficial to our farm that we purchased components which will allow us to utilize this system on two other tractors. We wish to expand further into implement guidance as well as precision applications of fertilizers and pesticides which can be accomplished by adding components to the original system we purchased.

The Trimble dealer in Alaska is Accupoint Inc. They were able to expand from the construction and survey industry into agricultural applications of this guidance system, in order to help meet our farms needs. During their expansion process, they found it necessary to offer additional training for their staff and worked diligently to get our system up and running. The owner of Accupoint informed us that although there were similarities between agricultural and construction applications, he would need to send his employees to Trimble Training to meet the specific need for tractor guidance. They were very helpful throughout the process and were always available for trouble shooting and problem solving.

In February of 2010 at the Alaska Potato and Vegetable Growers Conference, Ben Vanderweele gave a presentation about the Trimble Ag GPS Autopilot with RTK system. Trimble brochures were made available to anyone interested along with contact information for Accupoint.

Vanderweele Farms thanks the State of Alaska, Division of Agriculture for this grant opportunity. The funding we received not only helped benefit our farm but also laid the groundwork for others that might be interested in using GPS guidance systems on their farms. We believe that continued innovation is necessary for Alaskan agriculture to provide the best product possible for consumers.



