Independent Precision Ag Alliance
IPAA: A diverse group of precision ag-focused businesses that share ideas and grow together
Triangle Ag-Services, Fort Benton, MT
Precision Agriculture Adoption and Profitability

https://agecon.unl.edu/cornhusker-economics/2017/precision-agriculture-adoption-profitability
It’s easy to get buried working in the business, and not on the business
We all work in our own “Work Bubble”. We forget to look outside for new ideas and inspiration.
Talking openly to other people in the industry helps relieve some of the burnout
HTS Ag

Arlin Sorensen

Let's create a peer group for precision ag companies!

Adam Gittins

I'll make the calls
Come join our new peer group!

Adam Gittins

What are you selling?
How much will it cost?

Adam Gittins
2010, First meeting in Chicago, IL

This Photo is from https://foursquare.com/v/chicago-board-of-trade/49e51497f964a52091631fe3
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General Requirements

- All members are involved in precision ag: selling equipment, services, software, support

- Members are interested in learning how to do things better, they are open to new ideas.

- The meetings allow members to spend quality, focused time ‘on’ the business and not ‘in’ the business.

2016 Gary, SD
Independent Precision Ag Alliance

Structure

• The companies are members; the company may be represented by one or more people at each meeting. Generally, it’s the same person or people.

• Member companies are not geographically adjacent, so there aren’t competitors in the same meeting sharing information.

• Being geographically diverse also introduces different precision ag applications and solutions.
Meetings are facilitated by someone who isn’t a member.
Membership

• Members must be invited to join by another member or the facilitator. Any prospective members must be approved by the group before attending a meeting.

• Members are to attend two meetings a year, if they miss more than two meetings in a row, they may be asked to leave the group.

• New members say: Dealers from all over the country with different crops, different products, but they all have the same problems! It’s like we’re all talking to the same customers.
Member Presentations at Meetings

• Members are required to present innovative business practices at each meeting. Members each put in $20 and then make their presentations. Everyone votes, the member with the most votes takes all the money. If a member doesn’t have a presentation, they have to put in $40.

• Members are required to set goals to accomplish between the meetings. They will be asked to report on their progress at the next meeting.
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Sharing

- Most of the content of the meetings is confidential, all members **must** agree to confidentiality.

- Members are required to share financial information, explain changes from last meeting.
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Costs

- Members help set agendas, meeting locations and share costs.
- There are no dues and the facilitator is not paid in cash.
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- Over time, members have found that meeting at different company locations keeps costs down and helps understanding of different company structures and agriculture in different areas from a precision ag perspective.
Field Trips

2012
Kalispell, MT

Visiting Glacier National Park

South Dakota Wheat Growers
Now: Agtegra

2013 Summer
Aberdeen, SD

Amazing fertilizer storage capacities
Field Trips

2014 Summer
Intercourse, PA

Hoober, Inc.
CNH Dealer

Finding the right town...

Mobile training center
Field Trips

2014 Winter
Las Vegas, NV

Sharing transportation costs
Taking in the sights on the strip
Networking over dinner
Field Trips

2015 Summer
Embro, Ontario, Canada

Participating in AgTech GIS Anniversary Meeting

Hanging out together after the meeting

Enjoying the sunset on the lake
Field Trips

2017 Summer
Frankenmuth, MI

Mike Houghtaling
Precision Consulting Services

Cucumber harvest

Specialty harvest equipment
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Independence

• Staying independent of a brand results in a free exchange of vendor critiques.

• Staying independent allows the introduction of competing products/companies at meetings.

• Members come from different types/sizes of companies. Iron dealers, standalone precision ag hardware, standalone software, co-ops. Some include agronomics, soil sampling, data processing.
Inherent Value of IPAA

• When several companies concentrate in one place then vendors pay attention.

• Guest companies generally contribute to the costs of the meeting for the chance to present to the group.

• Guest companies include: Ag Leader, Trimble, SST Software, AgIntegrated, My Way RTK, Satshot, Raven, Stable N, AgriSync, Reichhardt and RainWise.
Outreach

• Conducted vendor satisfaction survey among group members and shared with vendors

• Members help each other at special events like an anniversary meeting or open house

• Outreach attempts to share information include website discussions, but for the most part we are all busy and participation in the group is the priority.
Why should you participate in an independent peer group?

Don’t reinvent the wheel, learn from everyone that you can

Business is tough, make sure you’re not trying to do it alone

Use positive peer pressure to improve your business and personal development

2014
Embro, Ontario

2015
Orlando, FL
Thank You

Delmna Heiken
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