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Startup Provides Useful Product to Farmers

A Peachtree Corners startup has created a product to help make changing weather patterns a little less burdensome on farmers.

[Trellis](#), a budding business at [Prototype Prime](#), provides an affordable option to farmers dealing with turbulent temperatures and irregular rainfall.

The company was started in 2015 by Liz Buchen and Adam Snow, both Georgia Tech graduates. They have degrees in aerospace engineering and both saw a void in the agriculture market for a tool to help prevent overwatering and provide farmers with timely information about their fields.

Watering a field typically costs a farmer about \$9 per acre for every inch of water applied, so watering 100 acres one time yields a \$900 water bill. Having farmers in her family, Buchen recognized the expense and learned that existing monitoring stations were pricey, at \$2,000-\$5,000 each.

Buchen and Snow set to work on finding a solution, using circuit boards, cellular technology, a 3-D printer, hardware and software.

"Our secret sauce is in the software," Buchen said.

What makes the product different, in addition to a lower unit price of \$450, is its ease of use.

Farmers will get 'dry' alerts on their phones, either by text or email. Information is quickly available on a color-coded dashboard. Farmers who want to dig into the data a little more can do so in monthly reports.

Trellis now has 700 devices located throughout the United States. Sensor stations placed in the ground send data to a cellular base station in the field. The sensors collect moisture readings at two different depths, 5-to-24 inches down, depending on the crop. The sensors also measure temperature. Data is collected every two hours and stored in the cloud.

"Only 10 percent of growers use sensors to decide when and how much to irrigate," Buchen said.

"We're trying to change that."

The Prototype Prime startup incubator, located at 147 Technology Parkway, assists early-stage hardware and software startups in launching.