



## Meet the Founding Fathers of Center Pivot Irrigation

By The Groundwater Foundation

### Lindsay Manufacturing Co.

In the 1950s, Paul Zimmerer started a farm equipment business in Lindsay, NE. One of his early products was the first successful irrigation towline for rough terrain. Paul's sons, Arthur and Bernard, designed and built the first Zimmatic center pivot in the 1960s. The pivot's electric drive system was designed to handle hilly terrain and featured the first enclosed worm gearboxes, which remain the standard drive mechanism on today's electric center pivots. Lindsay Manufacturing Company's first Zimmatic center pivot was installed in 1969 on a farm near Newman Grove, NE.

### Reinke Manufacturing Company, Inc.

Richard F. Reinke was born in Byron, Neb., in 1922. Reinke founded Reinke Manufacturing in 1954 and is considered the father of modern-day

mechanized irrigation. Over the next 30 years, Reinke helped the company achieve 30 worldwide patents and many industry firsts, including offering a stainless steel mainline pivot. He passed away at age 80 on Feb. 27, 2003.

### T-L Irrigation Company

T-L Irrigation Company's founding father, LeRoy Thom was raised on a farm in Ravenna, Nebraska. Before founding T-L Irrigation in 1955, Thom worked a wide variety of farming jobs from custom combining to irrigation engineer. Today, the family-based company has 250 employees and sells thousands of pivot irrigation systems in 44 states and in more than 30 countries. Thom's farming background is what sets his company apart from other irrigation manufacturers. He stresses that before anything else he is a farmer and all new products are tested on his family's farm before being sold.



Richard F. Reinke



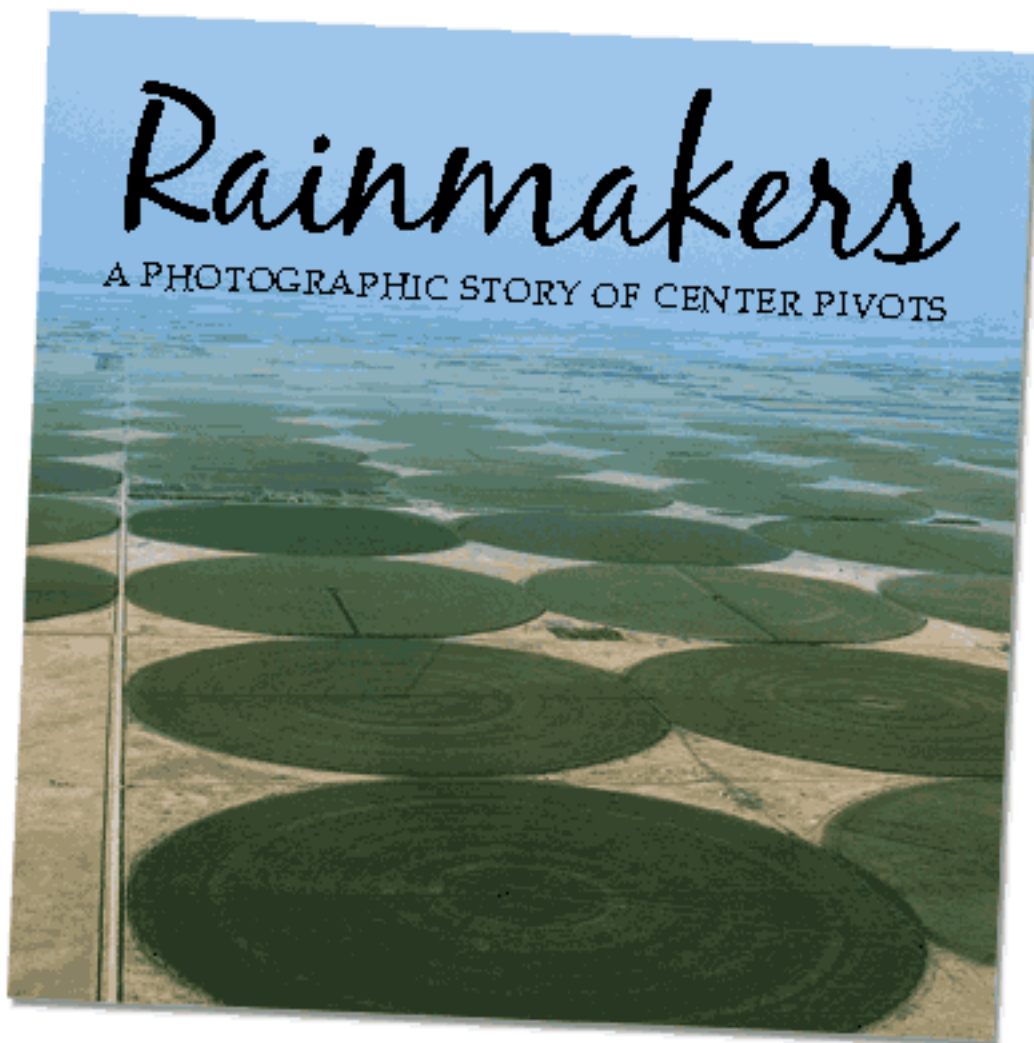
LeRoy Thom

## Valmont Industries, Inc.

Valley Manufacturing Company (Valmont Industries, Inc.) was founded in 1946 by Robert Daugherty. He invested his entire life savings to start the company, which manufactured farm elevators, hay rakes, wagon hoists and tractor front end loaders. In 1954, he acquired patented manufacturing and sales rights for self-propelled irrigation system from farmer Frank Zybach. Advancements in technology like linear move systems, hot dip galvanizing, low-pressure nozzles, and computerized pivot panels has made Valmont the largest manufacturer of center pivots in the world.



*Robert Daugherty*



*"Rainmakers: A Photographic Story of Center Pivots" is available for purchase directly from The Groundwater Foundation and at speciality bookstores nationwide.*



The Groundwater Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and motivating people to care for and about groundwater. Contact us at 1-800-858-4844, [info@groundwater.org](mailto:info@groundwater.org) or visit us online at [www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org).

