

USE OF AN ELECTRONIC RESPONSE SYSTEM TO ENGAGE AUDIENCES. Bob Hartzler and M.D.K. Owen, Professors, Department of Agronomy, Iowa State University, Ames, 50011.

Student response systems consist of hand-held infrared transmitters (similar to a TV remote control), an infrared receiver, and software to manage the equipment. The systems are being promoted for use in large classroom settings, with proposed benefits of engaging all students, increasing student involvement, and promoting instant feedback to students and instructors. The system used by the Agronomy Department is InterWrite PRS ([www.gtcocalcomp.com](http://www.gtcocalcomp.com)), but other similar products are available.

The InterWrite system allows the user to enter multiple choice questions directly into a Powerpoint presentation. During the presentation participants answer questions using their remote. Each user's remote has a unique frequency, and the successful reception of their response is indicated on the screen. After the allotted time a bar graph appears on the screen that displays the distribution of responses by all participants. The software maintains records of the entire session so that the knowledge base of the participants can be evaluated following the meeting.

Our department purchased the system over two years ago, but currently only two faculty have actually used it. I have used the system at the Integrated Crop Management Conference and at the Herbicide Short Course. Both of these Extension meetings were full day events in which participants tend to show 'lecture fatigue'. The use of the response system helped maintain the focus of the audience and provided valuable feedback on the knowledge level of Extension clients. Approximate cost of the system is \$1700 for a package with 1 receiver and 32 transmitters, or \$2600 for 2 receivers and 50 transmitters.