



WATER-INSIGHT

from **QTECH**
DATA SYSTEMS

EP4 Release

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EP4 vs EP3: What You Need to Know

A guide to the new EP4 Smartbridge system for farmers and irrigation system users

Overview

The EP4 is the next generation of Water-Insight hardware, replacing the EP3. The EP3 has been discontinued from production, though existing units will continue to be supported for as long as replacement parts are available and repairs remain economically viable.

Both devices do the same core job: they let you communicate with, schedule, update and check the status of the IPC (Sprinkler Controller) devices on your farm. The key difference is the interface. The EP3 is a standalone radio device with its own touchscreen and an SD card. The EP4 replaces the EP3 with a

smartphone app, IMS Connect, paired with a small radio device called the EP4 Smartbridge.

Two other systems you may already use sit alongside both devices: IMS, Water-Insight web-based application for managing and monitoring your irrigation system online, and RXPS - RX Plastics Pod Scheduler, a Windows PC application many farmers / installers use to build watering schedules. Both remain fully supported with the EP4.

EP3 vs EP4 at a Glance

Feature	EP3	EP4
User interface	Built-in touchscreen	Smartphone app (IMS Connect) + EP4 Smartbridge radio
Configuration data	Stored on an SD memory card	Synced to your phone via the cloud, or transferred from RXPS
Mesh radio communication	Supported	Not currently supported (point-topoint only)
Spectrum / protocol analyser tools	Included	Not currently included

IPC firmware upgrades	Performed one device at a time	Performed one device at a time
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Note: Water-Insight has found that most users don't rely on mesh radio communication for routine maintenance, which is why it isn't included in the initial EP4 release.

New on the EP4

The EP4 also introduces capabilities that weren't available on the EP3:

- Replace a faulty IPC in the field by swapping it out for a new one
- Poll a device instantly by scanning the QR label on it
- Poll nearby devices that have been geolocated in IMS or RXPS
- Automatically fix common issues when you poll a device — such as correcting the time or resolving a wrong radio channel
- Improved user interface and IPC list filtering in IMS Connect

How Configuration Data Reaches Your Devices

Your farm's set-up is stored as “IPC Configuration Data” — a Podlist (the list of IPC devices on your farm block) and Schedules (when each device should run). Whichever software you use to build this data, it eventually needs to reach the field devices. How that happens depends on the software you use to manage your farm:

- If you use IMS: your configuration is stored in the cloud. IMS Connect syncs it to your phone automatically whenever you have internet coverage, and retains any changes you make offline until coverage returns.
- If you use RXPS: your configuration stays in a database on your PC, not in the cloud. A new facility called the IMS Connect Data Exchange converts your RXPS data into a format the phone can download, replacing the old process of copying files to an SD card.
- Either way, you no longer need an SD card with the EP4 — configuration data now reaches your phone over the internet.

Do You Need an Account?

IMS Connect is free to download, but you now need to register for an account to use it. Registration gives you a username and password, which is also what enables secure features such as downloading IPC firmware directly to your phone.

A new Basic account (free) has been introduced specifically to give EP3 users the simplest possible path onto the EP4, whether or not you've used IMS before.

What a Basic Account Includes

Included

- Operate one farm, plus up to 2 farm hands or a third-party agent who can help manage it
- All routine EP4 functions: polling IPCs, scheduling and inhibiting, setting the time, manually controlling valves, configuring the radio channel or Farm ID, and upgrading IPC firmware
- All the new EP4-only features listed above
- As an agent: sync and manage up to 2 additional farms already set up in IMS
- As a farm owner: one extra free “test” farm in IMS (up to around 5 IPCs) so you can try out IMS Cloud and the sync process before committing

Not Included (Standard account required)

- Water tank level monitoring
- Syncing real-time IPC status (such as battery voltage or valve position) to IMS for historical logging and reporting — you can still see this status on your phone
- Managing more farms or agents than the limits above
- More than one “local” farm on your phone (i.e. more than one farm managed via RXPS)
- Certain advanced IMS Connect features, such as advanced firmware updating or site IPC deployment

Moving from EP3 to EP4

If your farm is already set up in IMS, moving to the EP4 is straightforward: there's no SD card to manage, your firmware and app updates are handled automatically, and changes typically take effect immediately while your phone is connected.

If you manage your farm with RXPS, you can keep working the same way as before. The only change is that instead of writing your configuration to an SD card, you'll transfer it to your phone via the Exchange, where it's stored as a local farm. Your RXPS database on the PC remains the master copy. Firmware and app updates are handled the same way as for IMS users.

For help migrating your whole farm onto IMS, or with any part of the transition, contact Water-Insight for details - info@waterinsight.co.nz.