

Farm Friendly for 130 Years and Counting

FOR MORE THAN 130 YEARS, we have been helping farms grow.

In the early 1900s, the only farmers who had electricity lived on the edge of a village or town.

That all changed on Feb. 4, 1927 when we built a seven-mile electric line between Mason and Dansville, about 12 miles southeast of Lansing.

Nearly 10 years later, we had more than 10,000 miles of rural lines and 41,307 farm customers.

Since the Mason-Dansville line was energized, rural Michigan has changed dramatically.

In 1949, we brought electricity to our 100,000th farm customer, making us the first utility in the nation to reach the milestone.

“Consumers Energy is proud of the stability the Mason-Dansville line brought Michigan and the stellar relationship we have had with the agricultural community over the last 90 years,” said Jim Baisden, Manager of Agricultural Services.

Today, we serve more than 30,000 farm customers, more than any other utility in Michigan.

While horses, swine, poultry, sheep and cattle account for the largest number of animals in our service territory, llamas, buffalo, elk and other exotic species also benefit from having the company as a “wired hand.”

“We look forward to continue providing the safe, reliable and affordable electric service to agricultural customers that they’ve come to expect of us,” Baisden said.

Learn more about how we serve customers down on the farm at ConsumersEnergy.com/farm.

Thinking about a new service or upgrade?

AT CONSUMERS ENERGY, we are committed to delivering the energy you need, whenever you need it. However, to ensure a safe and efficient connection, it can take about 4.5 months to install a new service or complete an energy upgrade.

First Phase: Scoping – You provide some details for what you need. This includes electrical and natural gas load demands, a location sketch and the needed voltage for electric. Basically, we need to know how much power you need and where. This generally takes about four weeks, depending on how

quickly you provide this information.

Second Phase: Design – Our designers verify our system capacity, size facilities and figure out how to get our utility facilities from point A to point B. In addition, they produce working prints and determine customer costs. This takes about four weeks, but varies based on the complexity of the work.

Third Phase: Pre-requisition – We may need your assistance in contacting neighbors to secure easements. We may also need to secure permits to complete the job. A property deed may be required from you to verify

ownership. We will need payment in full by the end of this phase before we can continue. This phase takes two to four weeks, but varies depending on the third parties that are involved.

Fourth Phase: Construction – We come to your property and begin the work you requested. This phase can take four to six weeks based on the complexity of the work.

Please contact us well in advance to get your project going at **800-805-0490**.

Just the Facts: Stray Voltage

STRAY VOLTAGE IS A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE NEUTRAL TO EARTH VOLTAGE (NEV). NEV is a measurable level of voltage, which may occur between a metal object and the adjacent floor or earth. It is often called stray voltage when measured between two points that can be simultaneously contacted by livestock.

Simply stated, voltage is the pressure that pushes electrical current through wiring systems, lights and electrical equipment.

When a person or animal feels a tingle or shock, the person or animal is actually feeling electrical current flowing through the body or portion of the body.

Sometimes a condition within the wiring on a farm, the wiring at a neighbor's property or the power lines supplying a farm may cause the voltage between equipment and the adjacent earth or floor to increase to the point where it can be felt by an animal or person.

This stray voltage can range from a slight tingling or burning sensation at a cut to an uncomfortable jolt for animals. If a person feels an uncomfortable jolt, the problem is probably not NEV but a serious problem with the wiring system or equipment.

What can I do to help reduce my risk of having stray voltage on my farm?

The most important thing you, as an owner, can do is properly maintain your wiring system. Over time, your electrical equipment and wiring can become hazardous due to physical damage, corrosion, and overloading, especially in a farm environment.

Having a qualified person inspect your equipment and wiring on a periodic basis is highly recommended. They can identify potential electrical problems that may be hazardous to your livestock and create future stray voltage issues.

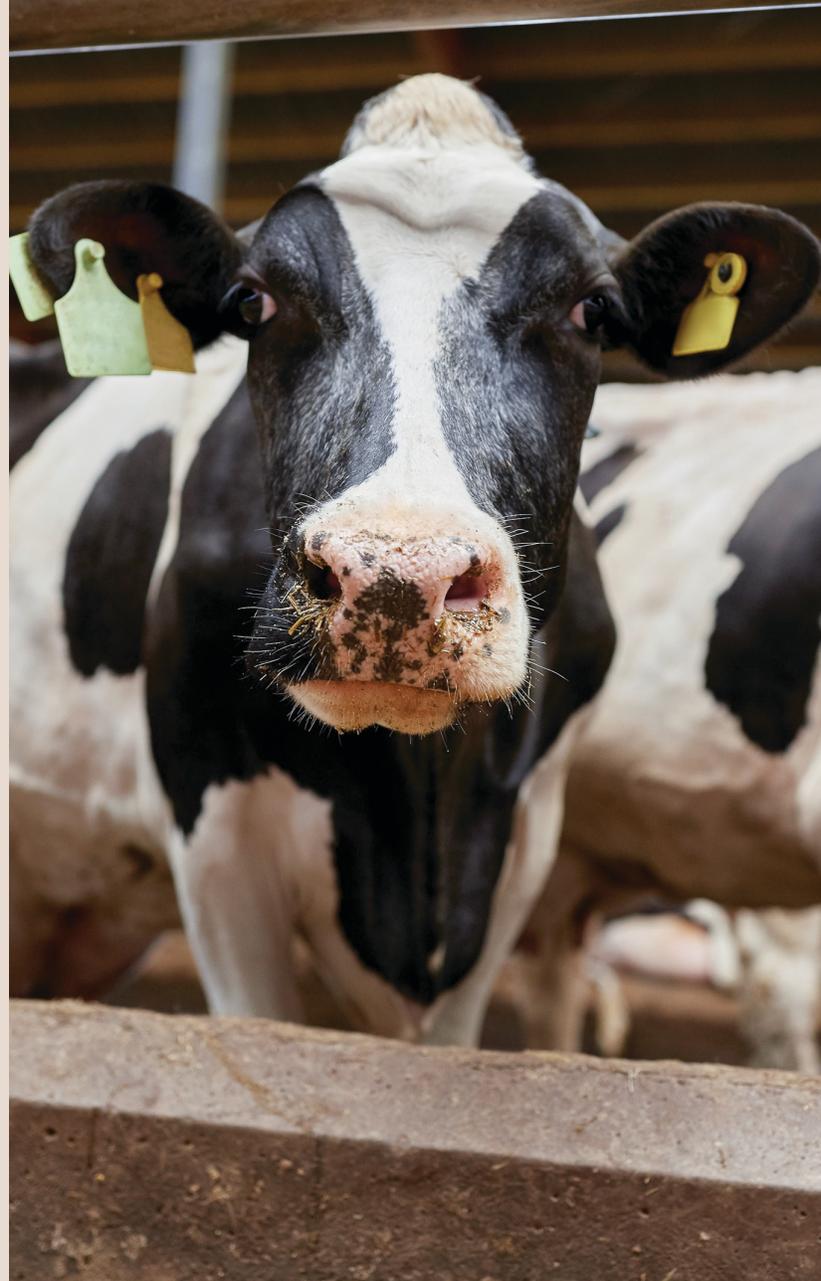
What is Consumers Energy doing to protect my farm from stray voltage?

If you have a farm with livestock, chances are your electrical service has an isolated neutral. This neutral isolation is completed at the transformer that serves your farm. There are more than 12,000 farms throughout the state that have a separated neutral service. Our Agricultural Services department conducts thousands of inspections per year to ensure the neutral separations are maintained and working properly.

How can I have my farm tested for stray voltage?

Contact the Agricultural Services department at **800-252-8658** to schedule your free inspection.

To learn more about stray voltage visit the Midwest Rural Energy Council at www.mrec.org.



Work SMART, Work SAFE

JUST BECAUSE you can't see natural gas or power lines doesn't mean they aren't buried below your job site or hiding behind trees.

The best way to stay safe from them is to be aware of their location and call **MISS DIG 811** to identify where underground service lines are located. **The service is free.**



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Watch for Overhead Lines

BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR OVERHEAD LINES and stay at least 10 feet away from them when doing work on a farm.

In the event equipment does contact overhead electric lines, Consumers Energy offers these important safety tips:

- Remain in the vehicle until help arrives.
- Call 9-1-1 or Consumers Energy immediately at **800-477-5050**.
- Warn others to not come near the equipment.
- If fire or other imminent danger forces you off the equipment: jump clear without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time to avoid an electric shock. Land with your feet together and shuffle away, keeping both feet together and on the ground.
- Never attempt to move any electric lines by yourself – wait for a qualified utility personnel to help.

Additional safety resources to help keep agricultural workers and contractors safe can be found by accessing **ConsumersEnergy.com/worksafe**. This link contains free materials such as DVDs and workbooks that can be downloaded or requested to assist with sharing important electric and natural gas safety information with workers.



Are You on the Right Rate Plan?

MAKE SURE you are on the proper energy plan to fit your businesses needs.

- **ELECTRIC:** If you are a small or medium business, you're likely taking service between 120-600 volts, and if you are a big business your business is taking service at 2,400 volts or greater. Time of use rates also may be a better choice for you.
- **NATURAL GAS:** You may qualify for a more economical rate based on how much natural gas you use each year. Eligible rates are General Service (GS) 1, 2 and 3.

- **GS-1** is best for annual use up to 1,000 Mcf
- **GS-2** is best for annual use from 1,000 Mcf to 10,000 Mcf
- **GS-3** is best for annual use greater than 10,000 Mcf

Confirm you are on the correct residential or business rate by comparing the rate code on your bill with its rate description.

Learn more about electric and natural gas rates at ConsumersEnergy.com/ratesbiz. If you're still not sure if you're on the best rate, contact our Business Center **800-805-0490**

At Your Service

Consumers Energy has launched an Agricultural website that addresses the energy needs of farmers around the state.

Visit **ConsumersEnergy.com/farm**

Consumers Energy
Michigan

EMERGENCY CONTACT OUTAGES LOGIN / CREATE A PROFILE
Ann Arbor, MI 30°

RESIDENTIAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY COMPANY
Account Management Business Center Customer Service Energy Efficiency Products & Services Smart Energy

Agriculture Resources

We Know Our Way Around a Farm

We're Ready to Go to Work with You

Our Agricultural Services group is made up of energy experts who know their way around a farm. Now we'd like to get to know yours. Working together, we can pinpoint your energy needs. We can do anything from identifying and resolving stray voltage problems to advocating for new services and expansions and providing a viewpoint on your equipment needs. We can even help lower the cost of installing a new irrigation system and lower the energy costs for grain drivers. Let's get to work together.

Consumers Energy

Count on Us®

Agricultural Services Department, P14-504
Consumers Energy
1945 W. Parnall Road
Jackson, MI 49201

Some of our services include:



New farm service requests or upgrades



Free stray voltage electrical inspections



New natural gas service requests



Advising clients on equipment needs

For more information about agricultural services visit
ConsumersEnergy.com/farm
or call 800-252-8658