

## Demand Response Helps Poultry Farm Savings Hatch Farm Improvements

Schipper Eggs has been delivering millions of eggs around the country for decades and chances are pretty good that you have enjoyed one.

That's because the Holland farm is one of the largest producers in Michigan and one of only a couple

**Since 2018, Consumers Energy customers have earned over \$6.5 million in financial rewards through the demand response program.**

that delivers to all McDonald's east of the Mississippi River. The fast food giant purchases about 770 million eggs annually from the Mitten State.

As the poultry farm has grown from housing several hundred chickens to 1.6 million over the

years since its inception in 1918, costs have gone up as has the need for more power. Enter Consumers Energy, which continues to help Schipper's get the reliable service that they depend on while helping them save thousands of dollars through rebates and incentives. And there's more to come.

"As a company, we try to be as cutting edge and sophisticated as possible," said Tim Hofman, General Manager for Schipper Eggs LLC. "And Consumers Energy has helped us with that mission. The customer service has been excellent in bringing us up to speed on the latest cost saving programs."



Schipper Eggs delivers to all McDonald's east of the Mississippi River.

## Third Generation Farm Gets Brighter from Energy Efficiency

Charles Cary had a vision to start his own farm in Alma back in 1944.

He and his wife, Neoma, dreamed of one day sitting on their porch and surveying the hundreds of acres of fields surrounding them. They dreamed of their children and grandchildren and other family members helping run the farm while enjoying its many riches.

Those dreams are now memories – with both passing away in the last 10 years. But the family legacy continues.

"Grandpa was a visionary," said Matt Cary, who now runs the farm with his brother Jake and father Scott. "He was ahead of his time and loved technology and improving things on the farm. He made this place what it is today and that came with innovation, hard work and dedication."

Incentives and rebates helped to replace lighting at the Cary farm's mechanic facility.



Charles Cary, who passed away in 2010, started with a 260-acre cash crop farm. It has grown into a third generation 4,100-acre farm that continues to harvest crops (corn, soybeans and

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# Demand Response Helps Poultry Farm FROM FRONT PAGE



Demand response savings are reinvested in the Schipper farm.

One program that got Schipper's attention, and they signed up for earlier this year, was emergency demand response.

Here's how it works: when electric load is high on the grid in summer, the demand response program asks businesses to keep their energy use to a minimum until otherwise notified.

Together, demand response participants create a "virtual" power plant that helps manage Michigan's energy needs. And since demand response is "virtual" the electricity provided is green and renewable.

Just for signing up and being available if an emergency is called, Schipper is paid \$25 for each KW they nominate to reduce in case of an emergency. Even if there is no emergency called, they are still paid.

Each October, they will receive a bill credit of \$25,000, whether an emergency is called or not. Each time Schipper is requested to do that, it receives an additional incentive of about \$200.

In all, 331 businesses served by Consumers Energy have earned more than \$6.5 million in financial rewards

through the demand response program since its creation in 2018.

The farm will also receive savings from the LED bulbs that it installed with the help of Consumers Energy through its energy efficiency program in buildings throughout the farm, including buildings housing chickens.

"On a farm any time you can save money and it helps you

with your efficiency — you take it," said Hofman, who has about 50 employees on the farm. "We reinvest whatever savings we get right back into the farm."

That includes machinery used to harvest the corn and soybeans on the 1,000-acre farm. The grain is then used to help feed the chickens who eat up to 200 tons of food each day.

"It's not easy being a farmer, it's a tough, tough business," Hofman said. "You learn to take from the good times and save them for the bad times. That's why it helps

to have somebody like Consumers Energy to be there for you in all times."

Hofman said despite all the uncertainty in the world, farmers will continue to wake up each morning, harvest their fields and provide to millions of people. It helps to get an assist when needed.

"Farmers keep moving, no matter what is going on," he said. "We need to keep moving. We don't have a choice, people are depending on us, just like they depend on their energy provider."

## By the Numbers

**50** Employees on Schipper Farm

**200** Daily tons of feed for the chickens

**1,200,000** Eggs produced on the farm daily

**1,600,000** Chickens on the farm

**770,000,000** Eggs McDonald's purchases annually from Michigan farms, including Schipper Eggs

## Save energy and money. It's Simple.

The company's energy efficiency programs have helped customers save \$2.5 billion since they were created in 2009.

There are more than 40 agricultural-related incentives available through the program. There are more than 400 available for the entire program.

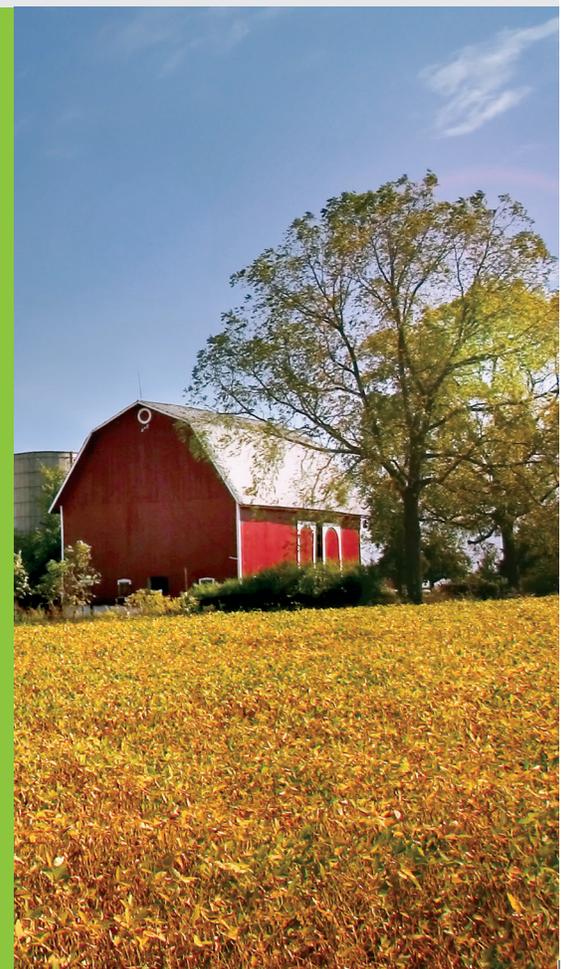
### For more information

**Visit:** [ConsumersEnergy.com/startssaving](https://ConsumersEnergy.com/startssaving) and click on "Special Programs" to learn more about our agricultural incentives.

**Call:** 877-607-0737

Learn more about our Clean Energy Plan at [MICleanEnergy.com](https://MICleanEnergy.com)

To learn more about how energy efficiency programs can help your home, visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/myhome](https://ConsumersEnergy.com/myhome)





## Hometown Service Leads to Satisfied Customers

Every time he's on the job, Brian Foor has the mindset that he wants his Consumers Energy customer to feel they are receiving exceptional hometown service. And customers like Jim Wolter love it when companies they depend on — like their energy provider — go above and beyond their duties.

What brought the two men together started a little over a year ago, when Wolter was having problems with his milking equipment. Wolter Dairy has about 140 cows on a farm in Casnovia, about 20 miles northwest of Grand Rapids.

"The equipment kept going out, and I had the equipment place where I bought it come back and try and repair it. No luck, it still kept going out for hours at a time," said Wolter, who has owned the farm since 1982. "They came back a few times and it was costing me thousands of dollars for all the new equipment I had to buy and the time I was losing milking the cows."

Foor, an engineering technician who works for the Agricultural Services Department, was checking electrical levels on the farm and could sense Wolter's frustration.

"I asked him what was wrong, and he told me about how his milking equipment kept cutting out and it was costing him thousands of dollars," Foor said. "He really didn't know what to do."

Foor decided on the spot to go above and beyond his duties and help out a customer. He told Wolter he had a background in electronics and would like to see if he could help him. After looking over the equipment, Foor determined there was an issue with the circuit board.

"He seemed so relieved that finally he had an answer to his problems," said Foor. "He kept thanking me and it really felt good to help him out."

Wolter contacted the third-party equipment provider and they were able to replace the circuit board. He hasn't had a problem since.

"I told Brian how proud I was of him," Wolter said. "He didn't have to help me, but he did. I'm sure I would still be having issues if he didn't step up."

Foor said working for Consumers Energy, he realizes that you have to walk the talk when it comes to serving the customer.

"Every day our customers depend on us to bring our A games to whatever job we do," Foor said. "Providing exceptional hometown service is a big part of our job."

Wolter said he came out of the experience a big fan of Consumers Energy as well as Foor.

"I was very impressed with the professional way things were handled," he said. "Consumers Energy and Brian were there for me in my great time of need. I will never forget that."

## Free Stray Voltage Inspections Available

### What is 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 who can inspect your equipment and wiring on a periodic basis is highly recommended. They can identify potential electrical problems that 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.

## Third Generation Farm Gets Assist from Energy Efficiency FROM FRONT PAGE

wheat) and has 2,300 cattle and stores grain – half to feed the cattle and the rest to sell to a third party for ethanol.

And with the expansion throughout the years comes more costs and the need for more power. Matt Cary said Consumers Energy has been there every step of the way.

“Consumers Energy has been a great partner for us,” he said. “Whenever we have needed something, all we had to do was make a call and they were right there for us.”

Cary said the farm is expected to save thousands of dollars through the energy provider’s energy efficiency program.

That includes a rebate that helped save money on a new grain dryer, which replaced a 27-year-old one. It also helped set up new lighting in the farm’s fertilizer storage building and the mechanic shop.

The 4,100 acre Cary farm is located near Alma.



The savings allows the family to reinvest back into the farm to buy much-needed equipment or other labor needs, Cary said.

“In our two buildings the lighting is much better now,” said Cary. “It helps our employees work more efficiently. And that is always critical in the daily duties of working on a farm.”

Cary said he would continue to support Consumers Energy’s energy efficiency program. He’s considering new incentives and rebates to help replace

lighting at his other facilities.

“I’m willing to work with them to save energy and money at my farm,” he said. “Every little bit helps.”

Cary received about \$32,000 in energy efficiency incentives and he’s expected to annually save about 192,000 kWh and about 1,500 MCF for natural gas.

That should save the farm about \$21,000 on its annual electric bill and \$6,000 on its annual natural gas bill.

“Energy efficiency is a terrific program,” Cary said. “I can’t think of a better way to move towards a greener world. I know we will do our part in continuing to try new things and build on my grandfather’s vision. One day I hope this will be a fourth-generation farm. But until then, my family and I will do our part to make the planet greener.”

# Helping You Roll Out Your Goods

No matter what you grow, we can help with:

- Farm energy service requests or upgrades.
- Free stray voltage electrical inspections.
- Advising clients on equipment needs.

Visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/farm](http://ConsumersEnergy.com/farm) or call 800-252-8658