

## Power Drives Technology

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An uncommon, but quite possible, event for anyone is a power outage. In days past, with all the power lines strung from pole to pole, the frequency of power outages was greater than today.

Today, with well-placed lines, the frequency of power outages is less, but power outages do occur.

Years ago, a producer could work an entire day only to find the power was out. No one even noticed until sunset and even then a candle was quickly lit and life went on.

That is not true anymore. If there is no power, the world comes to a halt. Backup systems are designed to assist in critical areas, but even with backup power, a drastic change in rationale emerged among the populous: no power, no work.

The days of occasionally turning on a computer to check on a particular work function have long passed us by. Today, the mind seems to engage as the computer powers up and disengages as the computer shuts down. Therefore, if the computer is not running, despite well-lit rooms, there is no reason to engage.

The constant incoming and outgoing e-mails, the nonaudible sounds of chat rooms and numerous embedded news, music or entertainment sites all cease to function. Even at home, the disconnect to the world brings upturned eyes and a new level of grunting.

The connectedness with technology is remarkable. At work and home, technology thoroughly is entwined in almost every branch of our lives. The obvious still may be brick and mortar, the feed bunks are still there and the cows are bedded down on the same hill, but access to the pen may be denied if the electric lock doesn't respond.

The crew can't check in because the system requires power. The tractor is behind the garage door, which needs power to open. The phones lasted for a while on backup power; however, soon all the electric components went dead, so there is no access. Not knowing when the lines may be alive and well, we just

don't know when to pick up the phone.

Yes, the generators are keeping essential operations going, but the small details are still shutting things down. Eventually, all give in and the world quietly settles into a rest. A technology-driven world drives technology-driven people. It is all paced at the speed of technology, waiting for technology-driven cues to provide a technology-driven function. A function someone is willing to pay for, so people can go home and enjoy the comfort of their technology-controlled environment, none of which works in an energy-deficient mode.

Technology, like it or not, is well on its way to becoming embedded in the cattle business. If one doesn't think so, just check for some little, inconspicuous devices in the hired hand's ear.

Undoubtedly, the devices may lead to a couple of cords that hook up to an iPod, comfortably tucked away for easy access. Future efforts at wireless connections may not only pave the way for constant connection to all the electronically ear-tagged cattle, but may very well provide instant access to the iPod, allowing communication with the next generation of producers.

This seems somewhat far-fetched, but technology just keeps shrinking, going from mega to micro to nano. Pica may be too large.

The problem is still the same today. When the power is out, the help all leaves and the cows and calves still need to be fed. Perhaps there is still a good place for a team of draft horses, provided the driver can keep his iPod.


May you find all your NAIS-approved ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at [www.BeefTalk.com](http://www.BeefTalk.com). For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to [www.CHAPS2000.com](http://www.CHAPS2000.com) on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0281.

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