



## CONSERVATION TIBBITS CHRISTMAS EDITION!

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# New Technology Makes Christmas Decorating Easier to Afford

The Christmas season is upon us, the signs are all around: St. Nick is making appearances in parades and department stores, Christmas carols have been playing since the day after Halloween, and houses near and far are ablaze with lights. It is this time of year that some of the most festive homes are using their power meter as a fan. There is, however, a lighting technology available that uses a fraction of the power compared to standard Christmas lights.

LED lighting is nothing new in general, but it is relatively new in the decorating department. LEDs, or Light Emitting Diodes are lights that run on about 10% of the power as compared to standard incandescent lights. And now that the technology has been out for a couple years, the price seems to have come down.

Here are some of the benefits to using LED lights

**Cost** - The low electricity consumption and durability benefits far outweigh the higher initial cost of a string of LED lights. Assuming an average of 200 hours per season, a 25 light string of incandescent lights will cost \$5.25. A string of LED lights will cost \$0.53 for electricity.

**Durability** - LED Christmas lights have been shown to last up to 50,000 hours! Compare this to about 7500 hours for an incandescent set. This means no changing bulbs at 30 below, and also means no unsightly burned out bulbs in your meticulously arranged color pattern!

**Safety** - Did you know that 14 people are killed in Christmas tree fires? You can be sure it's not the candy canes starting these fires, they're most often linked to faulty lighting. LED lights generate little to no heat and in turn drastically reduce fire risk. In addition to this, given the low-wattage of these lights, plugging your entire holiday light show into one outlet (yes you, we know you do it...) becomes far less dangerous

Electricity demands are always increasing and winter places higher demands than ever. It's no secret that reducing your electricity consumption has a ton of benefits, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing the burden on your pocketbook. So go ahead, spell out your Christmas joy in lights, and do it guilt free with LED!

### Things to think about this Month:

- Guilt Free with LED
- Tips for a "Green" Christmas
- Feed Testing
- Reduce your feeding time



## More Tips For A “Green” Christmas

Here are some other suggestions for cutting your power bill during the Christmas season

- Consider turning Christmas lights off at bed-time instead of leaving them on all night.
- No Peeking. A lot of heat is wasted by checking in on the oven while cooking. Avoid this by purchasing a meat thermometer that can be read outside the oven. This will ensure minimal power waste and a tender, juicy turkey too!
- Use a timer to manage your Christmas lights, which prevents them from being accidentally left on.
- Many electronics remain on “standby” after they are turned off. Chargers for cell phones, MP3 players, etc. also continue to consume electricity while plugged in. Consider unplugging or using switched plugs (power bars, etc.) for these items when not in use.
- If electronics or appliances are on the someone’s wish list look for those with the Energy Star logo. These products will save energy and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Stop Peeking. Keep the oven door closed until dinner is ready.”

## Give Yourself A Break

Are you still feeling the need to get those cows fed every day? Here are a few things to think about to save some money, fuel, and time.

By feeding once every 2 to 4 days you can eliminate the need to start and warm up the tractor daily. Every other day feeding is an accepted practice and cattle will do quite well on such a program. If you are concerned about waste, feed four days worth of feed at once, but put 2 days in one pasture or pen, and 2 days in another. By doing this, you can feed for four days by starting the tractor once, and walking out to open a gate once.

The other thing about this system is that it gives the gift of time! Do you have a weekend or overnight trip in mind? Want to get away to a conference or shopping trip? This is a tool that will allow you the time to do it.



## Feed Testing & Body Condition

So far this winter, the weather has been mild to warm. These conditions can mask poor feed quality as it doesn’t take much energy to put on weight when the weather is warm. Feed testing is a sure way to make sure that your cattle will do well when the weather gets cold. If feed quality is low, cattle will begin to lose body condition in cold temperatures. The NWACI is available to sample bales on your farm. Quite often there is no good way to get a representative sample of hay, especially from round bales. We are equipped with a hay probe that can collect samples easily from multiple bales to get a thorough representative sample. These samples can then be sent for analysis at several labs, including Sandberg Labs and Parkland Labs. The sampling service is available at no cost and the lab fees are a minimal cost. Please contact us if you are interested.

## Coming Events

- Sturgeon County Pest workshop — December 11, 2008 1pm — 3pm Bon Accord Community Hall
- Jim Gerrish Grazing Workshop December 16, 2008 10am—4pm Onoway Community Hall
- Environmental Farm Plan Workshop December 16—Hazel Bluff Hall—Westlock
- Septic System Management Workshop — Date and location TBD
- Water well Workshop Thorhild, Westlock, Sturgeon, Parkland and Strathcona counties -- Dates and location TBD