Neutral-to-Earth Voltage Evaluator Training Continues to be a Success

A Neutral-to-Earth Voltage Evaluator training course was held in May by the MAEC and the Agricultural Engineering Department at MSU. The three day course included 13 students from five utilities, a dairy construction firm, and a recent graduate of the Biosystems Engineering program. The objective of the course was to convey an understanding of neutral-to-earth voltage sources, investigative procedures, instrumentation and equipment needed for an on-farm evaluation. This course is open to anyone. It can be offered in other locations, pending sufficient interest, and it is offered annually at MSU. Please contact Keith Tinsey if you are interested in attending or hosting a course.
MAEC Releases Five New Publications

Five new publications are now available on the MAEC website.

- Construction Strategies for Minimizing Stray Voltage on Dairy Farms
- The Equipotential Plane in New Livestock Facilities
- Michigan Stray Voltage Protocols
- Protocols and Practices for Stray Voltage Testing
- On-Farm and Off-Farm Stray Voltage Sources and Pathways

The publications are the result of collaborative efforts by Jonathan Althouse, Dr. Truman Surbrook and Keith Tinsey, Agricultural Engineering, Michigan State University and by Thomas Wilson, Pennsylvania State University Extension.

Each paper was presented at one of two conferences sponsored by the NRAES (Natural Resource, Agriculture, and Engineering Service). Building Freestall Barns and Milking Centers: Methods and Materials and Stray Voltage and Dairy Farms were both held this spring in Camp Hill, PA. The entire conference proceedings are available through NRAES at www.nraes.org.

MPSC Case No. U-11684 Update

A significant step was reached in the Michigan Public Service Commission Case No. U-11684, Attorney General vs. Consumers Energy regarding Stray Voltage.

The MPSC Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) served his Proposal for Decision to all parties on April 22, 2003. Exceptions were to be submitted on or before May 20, 2003 and replies to exceptions were to be filed on or before June 10, 2003. Afterward, the process continues to the MPSC Commissioners. There is no timeline established as to when the Commissioners would act on the case.

The entire ALJ Proposal for Decision is 81 pages in length. The conclusion is included below as a summary. The document is available from the MPSC by contacting the commission's Case Management Section at (517) 241-6170 and is also available on the MPSC website at www.cis.state.mi.us/mpsc/orders/alj.

"VII. Conclusion

The ALJ finds that the AG’s complaint should be dismissed. The ALJ finds that the AG has the burden of proof to show by the preponderance of the evidence the allegations set forth in it's complaint including Count II of it's complaint. The ALJ finds that the AG has failed to show a stray voltage problem in Consumers’ service territory or, that Consumers has violated the NESC or MPSC rules, or negligently operated or maintained it's distribution system. The AG has failed to show that Consumers electric rates are unreasonable as a result of the inclusion of costs attributable to stray voltage research and litigation. Therefore, the ALJ recommends that the Commission dismiss with prejudice the AG's complaint in its entirety."