

Michigan Agricultural Energy Council (MAEC)

The Michigan Agricultural Energy Council provides a way to bring energy utilities, Michigan State University Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department, agricultural organizations, and State of Michigan agencies together on a regular basis to discuss electrical and other energy issues of State of Michigan agricultural farms and businesses and create a means of communication to increase productivity and solve problems. Emphasis is on efficient use of electrical power and energy efficiency to increase agri-business productivity. The main objective of the Council is to bring together agricultural organizations such as the Michigan Farm Bureau, the Michigan Milk Producers Cooperative, and M.S.U. Extension campus and field staff along with energy utilities, the Michigan Public Service Commission, the Michigan Energy Office, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture to discuss arising energy and electrical issues to prevent them from becoming wide spread problems.

The Council was organized in late 1993 and with its first major task to provide educational programs concerning neutral to earth voltage (often called stray voltage) for livestock farmers across Michigan and to provide training for electric utility service personnel to investigate and solve NEV issues at customer farms. In recent years the Council and MSU developed a nationally recognized farm and agricultural business energy audit program to increase energy efficiency for agricultural producers across Michigan. This Michigan Agricultural Energy Program provides nationally certified agricultural energy auditors to conduct these agricultural farm and business audits at little or no cost to agricultural producers. The cost for providing these audits comes from Michigan energy providers, and through grants secured by M.S.U. personnel from U.S.D.A Rural Development. This program has helped farmers and other agricultural businesses make significant reductions in energy costs and is ranked in the top ten agricultural energy programs in the Nation.