

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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**Resources Available to Reduce Farm Energy Usage**

Iowa agriculture uses about \$800,000,000 worth of energy consisting of natural gas, electricity, propane, fuel oil, kerosene, motor oil, diesel and gasoline. Diesel and gasoline account for fifty three percent of all energy used in Iowa agriculture. This large amount of energy usage provides lots of opportunities for energy conservation and improved efficiencies. A new series of publications have been developed to assist producers in evaluating their own farm energy use and also ways to save energy and improve profits.

The Iowa State University Farm Energy Initiative was formed to increase statewide awareness and implementation of farm energy conservation and efficiency practices. The purpose is to increase farmers' awareness of opportunities for improving efficient use of farm energy. The initiative also will help farmers and utility providers to explore alternatives to reduce farm energy demand and to improve overall profitability in a rapidly changing energy environment. The Farm Energy publications are a series of farm energy conservation and efficiency educational materials developed through the initiative to assist farmers in assessing and implementing energy saving practices.

Conducting a farm energy audit, which will help to identify ways to reduce or modify farm energy consumption and decrease operating costs, is a good place to start. By conducting an energy audit, farmers are able to analyze the payback period for on farm improvements; learn what farm procedures to implement to improve energy conservation; purchase energy efficient technology or equipment; and replace or upgrade older equipment. Again, the ultimate goal is to improve the bottom line by limiting expenses. If you are interested in conducting an audit, contact your utility provider for more information.

To help you get started with this process, you can begin by tracking the energy you use on your farm. ISU publication PM 2089c, *Tracking the Energy Use on Your Farm*, will help you track energy use, help you study your costs, and compare use and costs from month to month. This energy log will include electricity, diesel, gasoline, propane and natural gas amounts and cost. You can then calculate total use and cost per month and year. Once you have this information, you can analyze the various enterprises you have on your farm and see where you may be able to save energy either by changing practices or by purchasing energy saving equipment.

Depending on what you find and what your needs are, the Farm Energy publication series can be used to help you save energy. Some examples include: *Managing High –Temperature Grain Dryers for Energy Efficiency* (PM 2089f); *Shift Up and Throttle Back to Save Tractor Fuel* (PM 2089m); *Tractor Maintenance to Conserve Energy* (PM 2089l); *Energy Fundamentals for Farm Lighting* (PM 2089n); *Limiting Field Operations* (PM 2089d) and the most recent release is: *Fuel Efficiency Factors for Tractor Selection* (PM 2089o). To see the complete list of farm energy publications, go to ISU Extension's home page, click on store and then type in PM 2089.

For more information, contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.