

Standby Electric Power Equipment

Electricity is essential to modern farm operations and comfortable family living, observes Thomas H. Williams, extension agricultural engineer at the University of Delaware. Milk coolers, water pumps, household appliances and other vital equipment require continuous electric power service

In the event of a power failure, standby power — power provided by your own generator — can keep electrical equipment functioning and avert in-

convenience and possible financial loss.

Two types of standby power units are generally available, he says. Tractor driven generators and self contained power plants. Both require installation of a transfer switch between the electric meter and the service entrance.

The tractor driven generator is usually permanently installed at a planned location near the farm service entrance and meter. It can, however, be

mounted on a special trailer to facilitate moving it to isolated locations for occasional special use.

The tractor driven generator costs much less than a self contained unit and the tractor used for operation is usually available for emergency duty. However, the time lapse in moving the tractor into position, connecting the generator and starting the unit may be significant.

Self contained power plants consist of a generator and engine connected to function as a single unit. These are available as fully automatic systems that start instantly when power fails or as manually operated systems.

Self contained units cost two to three times as much as a tractor driven generator, says Williams. And the units require the services of a competent electrician in case of trouble and may fail to start because of moisture condensation from infrequent use.

In selecting a standby power system for farm, home or busi-

ness, determine the most economical and efficient unit for present and future needs.

Automatic units must have enough capacity to handle the maximum possible load on the wiring system; if the unit is manually controlled, it should serve only essential functions and must have the capacity to carry all simultaneously operating equipment.

Tractors for powering emergency generators must have a pto rating of at least two horsepower for each kilowatt output of the generator.

Finally, the electrical characteristics of the generator must match those of the load to be served.

Installation of standby equipment and wiring should be in accordance with the National Electrical Code, local ordinances and the requirements of your power supplier, says Williams. Inspection by your power company's representative and a

Prune Flower Shrubs When Bloom Fades

Prune spring flowering shrubs as soon as they finish blooming, urges a University of Maryland horticulturist.

If you prune shrubs now, they will have time to grow new branches this summer and produce flower buds this fall for blossoms next spring, says Francis R. Gouin, Extension horticulturist.

Also, he says, early pruning encourages vigorous new growth, and helps you shape the plant.

When you prune the shrubs, take out about a third of the old branches by cutting them off near the ground. If you leave a stub more than an inch long the plant will tend to send up large numbers of spindly, weak stems that will not produce many flowers.

If forsythia plants have completely outgrown their usefulness, it may be best to cut the entire plant flush with the ground and let new branches develop from the roots. This is often the best way to rejuvenate old forsythia, Gouin adds.

When you prune spring flowering trees, simply remove any dead or diseased branches and branches that are heavily shaded, or cut back the branches that tend to shade lower limbs.

local electrical inspector may also be useful.

Each manufacturer provides complete instructions for installing, operating and maintaining his units, he adds. So read this material carefully and keep manuals where they can be found readily. Unless equipment is properly installed and maintained, it may be useless in an emergency.

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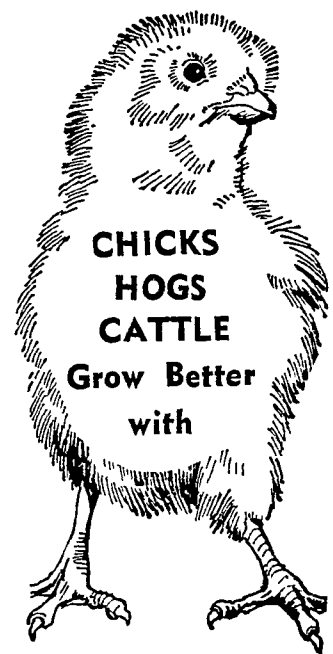
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