

Now EVERYONE is sexting! The Swiss cows that send a text when they are in heat

By [Damien Gayle](#) | 4 October 2012

Recent research has shown that sexting is just another normal, healthy part of modern dating for adults these days.

But now dairy farmers in Switzerland are field-testing a new device to give amorous cows a way to send texts to show they are ready for some loving.

The project hopes to make life easier for farmers, who in the past have had to keep a close eye on their livestock to figure out when they are getting frisky - and pair them up with a bull before they change their minds.



There's a good girl: Christian Oesch, a farmer, feeds an apple to a cow wearing a device on its neck that sends a text message when she is in heat, on his farm in Zollikofen, Switzerland

Farmer Christian Oesch, who cares for a herd of 44 Red Holstein and Jersey dairy cows in Zollikofen, Switzerland, is helping to test the device which implants sensors in cows to gauge their readiness to mate.

When the time is right, Mr Oesch gets a SMS message to his phone that lets him know it's time to get the animal impregnated - either the natural way or, more commonly these days, by artificial insemination.

The electronic detector has been developed by researchers from a technical college in Bern, the Swiss capital.

Such a sensor has become increasingly useful because dairy cows under stress to produce ever-greater amounts of milk are these days showing fewer signs of being in heat - making it harder for farmers to judge the right moment for conception.



Invasive: A probe that is inserted into a cow's uterus and alerts a farmer when it is in heat. The device is being tested because the visual signs of sexual activity are harder to detect

The sensor is implanted deep in the genitals of the animal and measures her body heat then transmits the result to a sensor with a SIM card attached to the cow's neck that measures body motion.

Claude Briemann, a computer specialist who helped design the system, told the New York Times: 'The results are combined, using algorithms, and if the cow is in heat an SMS is sent to the farmer.'

Mr Briemann claims the recognition rate of the gadget is as high as 90 per cent. But animal rights campaigners say the need for such a device highlights the problems of intensive dairy production.

Many of the additives added to modern animal feed upset the cows' metabolism, which has resulted in their not going on heat as often and, when they do, the signs are not so obvious.

Hansuli Huber, the managing director of the Swiss animal rights agency Tierschutz, told the NY Times that stress meant cows were calving less frequently than in the past.

'Now maybe they do so three times in their lifetime, while 20 or 30 years ago it used to perhaps seven times,' he said.

Nevertheless, Mr Oesch told the paper he is very pleased with the results of the test so far, despite some early problems with the sensors. 'They were not sturdy enough,' he said.