

Soumya Karlamangla | Oct 05 at 3:25 pm

When in heat, cows text farmers



A texting cow could be coming to farms near you soon. (AGRESEARCH INSTITUTE/ Getty Images)

The Swiss have taken “sexting” to a whole new level.

Made possible by new technology, Swiss cows are now texting their farmers when the animals are in heat, according to a [report by The New York Times](#).

The devices, which are expected to be sold publicly early next year, run on a fairly simple concept. One sensor is implanted in the cow's genitals that monitors body temperature, and another sensor on the cow's neck monitors body motion (since cows apparently become restless when in heat).

An algorithm combines data from the two sources, and when the cow is determined to be in heat, a text message is sent to the farmer. The sensor on the cow's neck has a SIM card so the farmer can pay the phone bill.

The sensors in the collars are the same as those in Wii computer games, and can detect slight changes in the cows' movements, [according to the Daily Telegraph](#). With this monitoring, farmers cannot only keep track of whether their animals are ill, but also, as visual cues become less noticeable, can help pinpoint when the cows are in the mood.

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The excessive milk production that these cows undergo and the extra nutrients added to their feed to increase that production take a toll on the cows, making reproduction less likely. So, these devices help farmers know exactly when the cows are ready to mate.

But the Swiss are known for having very strict animal protection laws, and the fact that there is a need for these devices has ruffled some feathers.

There is a certain justification," Hansuli Huber, the managing director of the Swiss animal rights agency Tierschutz, told the Times. "The real problem is the cows' not showing signs of heat, and this is linked with the demands made on cows to produce ever larger quantities of milk."