

Cow texts owner when in heat

By Edwin Kee on 10/02/2012 20:38 PDT



We humans are sexual creatures, although sometimes in our pursuit of intimacy, [a gaffe happens](#), but when it comes to instinct-driven animals, things are slightly different. Christian Oesch carries a smartphone around, being ready to attend to phone calls from humans, and the occasional text message from one of his cows. Owner of a herd of 44 Red Holstein and Jersey dairy cows, Mr. Oesch is currently testing a device which implants sensors in cows, where this device informs farmers whenever their cows are in heat. This SMS can be in any one of Switzerland's three main languages — German, French and Italian, in addition to English or Spanish, of course.

The electronic heat detector was developed because of the ever increasing amounts of stress for cows to produce larger quantities of milk, resulting in fewer and fewer signs of heat. This in turn makes life more difficult for Swiss farmers to use traditional visual inspections to know whether it is time to rope in a bull who is raring to go, or for the majority of farmers these days, the artificial inseminator.

This sensor will measure the cow's body heat, transmitting relevant results to a sensor that is affixed to the cow's neck which measures body motion. Basically, cows in heat become restless, making me wonder whether we share this trait with them bovines as well. "The results are combined, using algorithms, and if the cow is in heat an SMS is sent to the farmer," according to Claude Brielmann, a computer specialist who played a part in designing the system. This system boasts of a recognition rate of approximately 90%, but it sure as heck sounds totally unromantic.