

It comes down to 'control'

By: JOE GWERDER

SOCIETY has conditioned us to believe there are always winners and losers. Call me the eternal optimist but I disagree. I believe there are a lot of situations where all parties can come out on top.

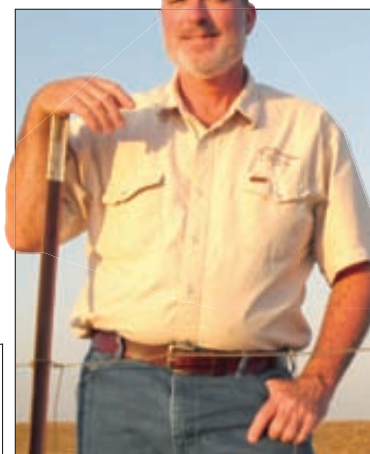
All decisions should be based on common sense, integrity, concern for

GUEST EDITORIAL

others, choices and benefits across the board if this is to happen. The agricultural industry is a perfect example. Farmer and ranchers are long-term

thinkers and planners, make decisions based on the common good, and place a high priority on doing what's right.

My grandfather operated an 80-cow dairy, and my father's ranch consisted of 150 head of beef cattle. I spent most of my 20s working with alfalfa, dryland grain, almonds and walnuts. Now my business is centered on helping farmers and ranchers control electrical costs.



JOE GWERDER

No control

In recent years oil prices have been the center of attention. Fuel costs have a huge impact on the ag industry's profit and loss. Unfortunately, the individual has little, if any, control over these costs. These decisions are at the political level. Electrical energy ("grid power") has a lot of the same characteristics. The lack of control or personal choices we have with our electricity is alarming. In the simplest terms, the only individual choice we have is how much we use. Even our quantity is controlled by the nature of our business and what it takes to operate it.

Incorrect stereotypes

There are great options, but incorrect alternative energy stereotypes. The two I hear most often are: "Solar power is great, but it takes too long to see the return on my investment"; and "Wind turbines would work well at my location, but they're ugly, noisy and kill birds."

Let me say this; Concerning solar energy, technology has greatly increased and costs have moderately reduced. It is very common now to see total investment returns in five to 12 years. The pay-back time frame is usually much quicker than the components' warranties.

As for wind turbines, there is a new breed of "vertical" machine now that will pleasantly surprise you. Bring an open mind. Analyze circumstances based on particular needs, so the best option is applied.

With the idea that each generation should do better, don't think of electricity as a luxury. To do so would be going backwards. Since utility companies can control their rates, you should choose how to control your bottom-line costs.

Do what's right

I truly believe we can do what's right for our planet and our pocketbooks at the same time.

There is a lot of talk these days about "green." Society is focusing more that ever on the environment. The ag community has a large interest in this whole new way of thinking.

The entire way of life of a farmer or rancher is based on the condition of the land, the water and environmental conditions that can affect the weather. In my opinion there is no loser. Farmers/ranchers can clean up and/or produce some or all of their own electricity.

Gwerder is founder of Constant Energy Source, Woodland, www.constantenergy.com.

YOU KNOW THE EQUIPMENT CAN HANDLE IT
BECAUSE YOU KNOW THE PARTS CAN.



At NAPA, we have an extensive inventory of parts that are built to stand up to the tough demands of your business. From belts to filters, fluids, and heavy-duty batteries, if it carries the NAPA name, you know it not only meets the manufacturers specs, it often exceeds them. It's no wonder people who count on their parts count on NAPA.

800-LET-NAPA | www.NAPAonline.com



Get The Good Stuff.®