

# Electric fence products energise farm sector

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The farm energiser and controller.

Farmers will have enhanced control and protection of their livestock and crops following Massey industrial designer Tony Parker's latest collaboration with technology company Gallagher, on a top-line series of new products that alert farm workers to potential faults in their electric fencing system.

The system includes the fence [energizer](#) with a separate, remotely mounted control panel for convenient access, a portable hand-held fault-

finder remote and permanently installed fence monitors that continuously check a zone of [paddocks](#) for fence performance. The new system not only powers the electric fence on the farm but also monitors its performance of the fences and, in the event of a fault, reports information back to the user via text messaging.

The innovative system is the result of extensive international research completed by a cross disciplinary team of design, marketing and engineering specialists. Professor Parker led the industrial design and worked as part of the Gallagher's project development team to bring the products to market.

All of the fence energizer products feature at the annual Field Days at Mystery Creek in June and, according to Professor Parker who is Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor at Massey's College of Creative Arts, "exemplify the critical role design plays in creating desirable and internationally competitive manufactured products and services,"

Electric fences can occasionally be affected by faults reducing effectiveness due to factors such as rough weather, but Gallagher's marketing manager Mark Harris says this latest range of products allow "the fence to speak to the farmer" represents the next leap forward in practical electric fence technology.

He describes the innovations for the farming sector as a "game changer" that will allow the farmer to know that electric fences are effective even when they are not around.



The fault finder remote in a farm setting.

A drop in fence performance triggers an alarm, which is displayed on the energizer controller and simultaneously sent to the farmer's phone via text message. Power to the fence can be turned off remotely to enable repairs and restored using the same devices.

"The consequences for the farmer is that they know whether the fence is functioning or not," Mr Harris says.

That was important as scenarios could otherwise develop where bulls got into the same paddock as heifers or livestock invaded maize or other crops.

"Farmers have always had a problem from time to time with fences not working and they usually only know after an animal escapes, but with

this technology we can let them know in advance if there is a fault."

Professor Parker says the project involved many challenges and opportunities.

"Transforming customer requirements and technological possibilities into a desirable system of products is a wicked problem. You cannot calculate the right answer, you have to design the best solution possible using a combination of research, creativity, visualisation, prototyping, critique and testing."

He stressed the finished products are the result of a multi-disciplinary team approach at Gallagher.

"It's like being in a really good orchestra but with everyone playing their different part. Sometimes you're the composer or conductor, sometimes the lead violinist or the person who has to strike the triangle perfectly at just the right time."

Professor Parker has previously worked with Gallagher on numerous other world-leading energizer and livestock weighing and electronic identification [products](#).

He is also the chief designer of the Hulme supercar and will be speaking about the importance of industrial design and his experience in the sector at a public lecture at the Albany campus on Wednesday May 22.

Provided by Massey University

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