

But not at any price!

In the last edition of Rural Retailer we discussed how to save electricity costs through efficient use of refrigeration. Another major component of the electricity bill for most stores is lighting.

This is an important way to make the shop a welcoming and interesting place for customers, but often this can only be achieved through higher electricity usage. You do need to actively manage the situation to get the balance right.

General Lighting to Sales Area

Make sure that the light fittings are in the right places. Fluorescent tube fittings running at right angles to the direction of the gondola runs leads to well lit gondola tops but areas of shadow on lower shelves. These lights really should run in the same direction as the aisles. And saving money by not replacing a needed but defective fluorescent tube is not a good policy.

Replacing standard tungsten light bulbs with low-energy use bulbs (compact fluorescent lamps or CFL's) can save up to 75% of electricity consumption and give significantly longer lamp life. Standard 38mm fluorescent tubes in switch-start fittings can be replaced with modern 26mm. triphosphate tubes of lower wattage, giving about 8% power saving plus longer lamp life.

More fundamentally, you can make long-term savings by upgrading your light fittings.

Standard fluorescent fittings can be replaced with modern ones with reflectors/louvers with high frequency electronic or low loss

control gear. These can provide 30-45% saving with much better lighting quality.

The same type of fitting can also be used to replace fluorescent fittings with opal diffusers. Light fittings do become dirty and discoloured over time and it is important to keep them as clean as possible.

Spot Lighting

This is an area where there are often real opportunities to use lighting effects to boost sales at limited cost. Ranges such as bottles of wine can display really well with spot lighting trained on them. Such lights can be bought quite cheaply in DIY outlets.

To save energy, replace mains voltage reflector lamps with low voltage tungsten halogen or metal halide discharge lighting. Savings can be up to 80% for equivalent lighting performance.

Basic Housekeeping

Staff training can pay real dividends. It sounds very obvious, but do make sure that lights in unoccupied rooms are turned off. If you have a bank of light switches, clearly label each of them to make sure that you and your staff only turn on those you actually need.

You may get a reputation as a moaning Scrooge, but the effect on your electricity bill should put a good smile on your face!

