

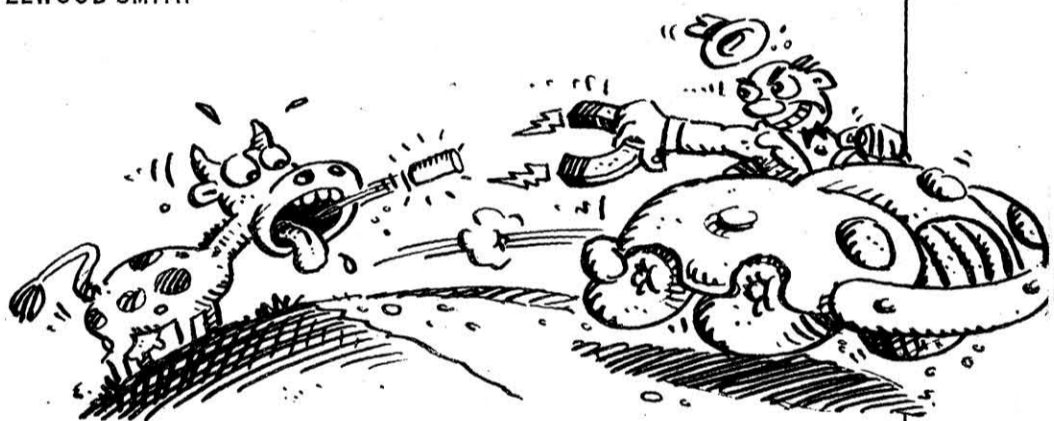
Magnetic Miles

A cow's path to saving fuel

Motorists in the Northwest seem to have discovered a new way to milk a few more miles out of their Cougars, Firebirds and pickups: cow magnets, believe it or not. These three-inch cylinders are implanted in a heifer's stomach to attract bits of metal that the animal might swallow while eating; the magnet thereby protects the critter's heart and lungs from being punctured. When those same magnets are taped, with positive and negative poles together, on a car's fuel line, they slightly heat the gas so that the engine burns more vapor. Result: four to six miles more on a gallon of gas.

At least that is the claim of George Goiri, 48, an Ontario, Ore., storekeeper, who began attaching magnets to his 1978

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Mark V and 1980 Ford pickup. He had wondered what effect magnets, which can be used to soften water by altering the molecules, would have on gasoline.

After the local newspaper published a story about Goiri in July, the cow-magnet craze struck Oregon, Idaho and Washington like gold fever. In ten days, Stocklin Supply near Portland, one of the largest animal health stores in the Northwest, sold 35,000 of the devices. It usually sells 15,000 to 20,000 a year. Goiri now has a patented kit called Magnetic Fuel Savers, which contains two plastic-coated magnets, clamps for fastening them to the fuel line, and directions for the fumble-fingered. Price: \$16 to \$19.90. Goiri has been contacted by some automotive-parts distributors, who are eager to test the apparatus. But the cows are reported to suspect that the whole idea is udder nonsense. ■