

# Cooking Cool with

# Electricity

**“The Sorensons sought to create a grill that would create a perfect steak every time.”**

by Brenda Kleinjan

**W**HEN LAKE PRESTON, S.D., RANCHER WALLY Sorenson wanted perfectly done steaks, he set out to build a grill that could accomplish the task.

He and his son, Adam, both electrical engineers, tinkered with designs and prototypes and, three years ago, launched DakotaGrills. Their stainless steel grill uses the latest in electronic technology to achieve grilling perfection.

The Sorensons sought to create a grill that would create a perfect steak every time – and would take care of itself so not to burn the food.

While the metal work for the grills is done in Brookings, the assembly of the grills takes place on the Sorenson farm, which is served by Kingsbury Electric Cooperative in DeSmet. The elder Sorenson was recently elected to the co-op board, having served as a director in the '90s.

The Sorensons further wanted a grill that would make tender, juicy and flavorful meat, yet

be durable and easy to use and clean.

You simply plug the grill into an outlet, insert the electronic probe into the food and set the controls. A couple of pushes of a button and you select how you want your food cooked and how hot you want your grill.

The grill also doubles as a smoker and high-quality oven.

Converts to the cooking method praise the grill's consistency.

“For steaks or roasts, you can't beat it,” said Russ Peacock of Bison of his DakotaGrill, which he has owned for about two years. “You put the probe in, set it for the temperature you want and they're done perfect.”

Peacock notes that if you're looking for that charred-on-the-outside hamburger common with other types of grills, the DakotaGrill isn't the best choice.



“They don't put the char on the hamburger like a gas grill,” Peacock said.

But, as Wally Sorenson notes, why would one want the charring to ruin a succulent chunk of meat?

Peacock also likes the efficiency of the DakotaGrill.

“You don't have to stand right there and stare at it. When it hits that temperature (say, 160 for medium beef) it quits and goes into a warm mode,” Peacock said. “Walk off from a gas grill and you've got briquettes when you're done.”

Peacock also noted that the grill's attractive design is practical, too.

“It's pretty easy to keep clean. It's a nice-looking outfit,” Peacock said.

In June, the Sorensons will be releasing their third model of the grill, this one a slightly smaller version designed for apartment settings.

DakotaGrills range in price from \$1,000 to \$1,500, depending on the model.

Owners of other types of electric grills, including the MECO Grill popular with many of the region's electric cooperatives, also praise the benefits of electric grills.

“You don't run out of propane, flare-ups are rare, it's easier to control the temperature.”

“The food cooks even. You can produce a well-done steak without it being black and burnt,” said Rich Johnson, member services director at FEM Electric Association in Ipswich.

“There's no 'boom' when lighting the grill. You just plug it in and set the temperature and wow – you're grilling,” Johnson said.

Adding a rotisserie to the grill expands the culinary delights.

“It produces the best roast chicken and pork loin you have ever tasted,” said Johnson.

Mike Kjose, member services/marketing director at Clay Union Electric Corporation in Vermillion also touts the grills' convenience.

“I like the speed of warming up – there's not much time waiting for it to heat up to a cooking temperature,” said Kjose.

“I find it easier to use the electric grill over a gas one. And, it still has that grilled flavor,” Kjose said.

**Opposite:** Father-son duo Adam Sorenson, left, and Wayne Sorenson, right, developed and sell three models of DakotaGrills from their Lake Preston, S.D., farm. **Above-Right:** The Sorensons grill a variety of foods on the grill that stands on their back deck. Kathy Sorenson, Wayne's wife and Adam's mom, has also baked cakes and cookies in the grill that doubles as a smoker and an oven.

Like with many types of grilling, different cooks have different ways to enhance the grilling flavor.

“My favorite thing to do is to soak wood chips in apple juice then put the chips right on the burner and smoke pork loins and chickens either right on the grill or on the rotisserie,” said Brian Jeremiason, marketing manager at Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative in Tyler, Minn., and Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association in Danube, Minn., “It makes a heck of a mess out of the grill, but the meat ends up tasty and juicy.”

To learn more about DakotaGrills, go to [www.dakotagrills.com](http://www.dakotagrills.com).



## Electric Grilling Safety Tips

- Basic safety precautions should be used when operating this or any electrical appliance.
- Never immerse or expose cords, plug or heating element in water or other liquid.
- Visually inspect cord, plug and all connections for damage and wear before operation. Replace or repair prior to operation.
- Before plugging or unplugging an electric grill, turn control knob(s) to OFF position.
- Unplug electric grill from outlet when not in use and before cleaning.
- Electrical cords should always be secured during operation to protect against product damage or personal injury.
- To ensure protection against risk of shock, electric grill should be connected to a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet in accordance with local codes.
- Do not use an electric grill in the rain.
- Do not use an electric grill near combustible or flammable materials.
- Always read the grill's instruction manual before use.

Source: Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association (HPBA)