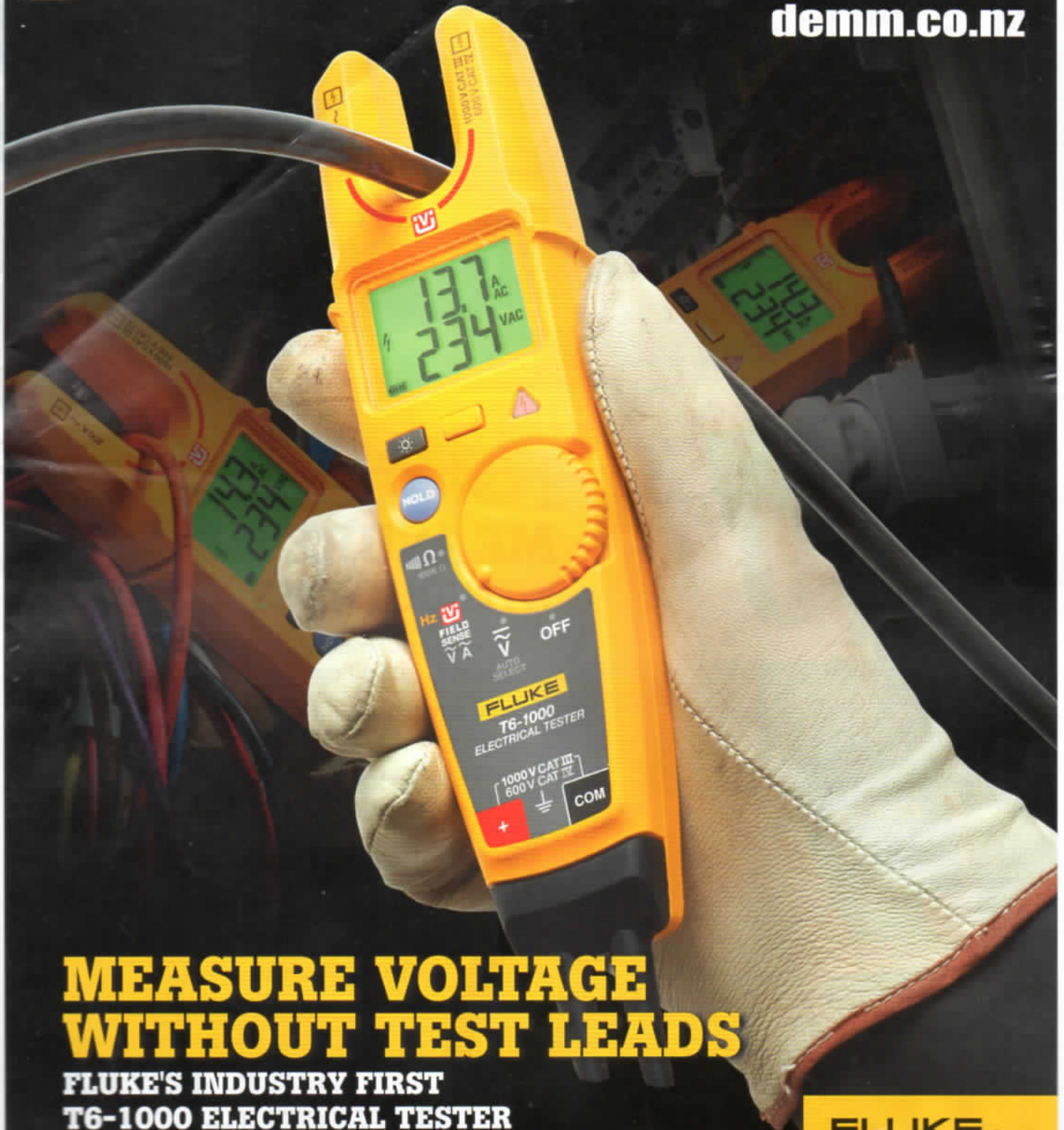


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EDITORIAL

A builder friend went to help out family in Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. All went well until the end of his stay when he broke his ankle in a prairie dog hole and wrenched his back at the same time. Then he got bitten on the nose by a fire ant. Actually, he got bitten on more than his nose by the ants, but it was that particular bite that was the most dramatic. His face swelled alarmingly, so you can imagine he was quite a sight rolling along on the wee scooter that cradled his cast. Hunched over with his bad back, his face swollen and red and feeling pretty awful, it's no wonder small children fled screaming.

Ants and prairie dogs have quite a lot in common when it comes to engineering. Ants build an elaborate colony with multiple chambers and connecting tunnels. Some chambers are to store food, some are nurseries, some merely resting spaces and some are mess halls. There are porous tunnels built above ground to ventilate the nest and maintain an even temperature inside.

Prairie dogs also live in extensive underground chambers which feature nurseries, sleeping quarters, toilets, and group meeting places. There are even listening post chambers, just under the surface, front doors, back doors and emergency exits. Sometimes free-loading rabbits also shift in. The towns can cover several hundred hectares and are made up of many family groups or clans. You can tell if prairie dogs are related because those that belong to the same clan greet each other with a kiss. Awwww....

JANE WARWICK



CONTENTS

- 02 Product Watch
- 11 News
- 19 Health & Safety
- 20 Thermal Imaging & Testing
- 26 Motors & Drives
- 32 Maintenance Planning



NEXT TIME...

- FOOD & BEVERAGE • LUBRICATION
- TEST EQUIPMENT

Your stories and photos – submission guidelines

We welcome your news and photos. To help us, please send all images as high resolution JPG files (file size to be at least 2mg+ or 2000k+). Apart from product shots, the best photos feature people doing something as empty factories and abandoned machinery do not make compelling photos. We prefer unformatted text and do not accept PDF press releases. Name photos and your text document with the same name. Send your news and photos to Editor@DEMML.co.nz

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