

Business Programs • Rural Energy for America Program Grants

Bishop's Orchards in Guilford Pick-Your-Own with Solar Stewardship

Bishop's Orchards, located in Guilford Connecticut, has a very long and proud history dating back to 1871. Now owned and operated by the Bishop's family fifth generation, they continue to improve and expand the business. Their retail market has seen many renovations in the recent years and they have continued to acquire additional farmland to grow their crops.

Currently they grow an extremely diversified crop selection on their over 300 acres of farmland. If it can be grown in New England chances are they grow it. To remain open year-round and ensure a full line of quality farm products to their many customers they often supplement they crops with those from other farms. Anything from fresh fruits and vegetables, to pies, ciders, cheeses, breads, pastries, grab n go meals, and their award-winning wine can be found at their over 10,000 square foot retail store, kitchen, winery, and bakery.

Their 60 full-time employees and up to 175 seasonal employees value providing customers with fresh and healthy food options while also catering to many of our indulgences. Seasonal entertainment is also available in the form of wine festivals, corn mazes, and offer pick your own apples, pears, peaches, strawberries, raspberries, and pumpkins.

Protecting the environment has also become one of Bishop's most important values. A commitment that became evident with their recent effort to build a solar farm on the nearby hillside. A project in which they sought and received assistance from Rural Development. The assistance came in the form of an \$224,238 Rural Energy for America grant that paid for 25 percent of the projects total construction cost.

When operational the system will generate 470,974 kWh annually, a total that will offset the farm's energy consumption by 70 percent. That will save the business approximately \$75,000 a year in avoided costs. This project is a prime example of how Rural Development's investments in renewable energy can help businesses continue to thrive while also protecting public health and the environment.



Aerial view of the solar array on Bishop's Orchards Market. Bishop's Orchard has a building array and ground mount solar array that provides 70 percent of the energy used.

Obligation Amount: \$224,238 Rural Energy for America Grant

Date of Obligation: April 2017

Congressional District: Representative DeLauro, District; 3-CT Senators Blumenthal and Murphy

Partners: Connecticut Farm Energy Program, Independence Solar, CT RC&D, Pat Munger Construction

Demographics: The per capita income for the town was \$37,161. About 2.3% of families and 3.1% of the population were below the poverty line, including 3.4% of those under age 18 and 3.8% of those age 65 or over.

Impact: This projects reduces the farm's energy use by 70 percent and will save the business approximately \$75,000 a year in avoided costs.