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Moorefield Poultry Farm Invests in Solar Power

The Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia has in recent years established a vibrant poultry industry. The typical poultry farmer raises chickens from a young age and to do so, requires a significant amount of heating and energy. Energy costs for a poultry farmer can greatly impact an agricultural producer's livelihood and returns on their investment.

Malcolm Farms, located in Moorefield, West Virginia, is a pullet poultry farmer, where small chicks are raised in order to develop future generations of broiler chickens for human consumption. The farm has two large poultry houses that use electricity for a large ventilation system and lighting. In 2012, the houses used roughly 45,000 kWh of electricity at a cost of over \$4,000 per year.



Malcolm Farms Operational Solar Panels

This energy usage information was used by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to create an energy management plan for Malcom farms. Following the establishment of this energy plan, Malcolm Farm management sought to reduce its energy consumption through the usage of solar power. Malcom Farms contacted and worked with the Natural Capital Investment Fund and Mountain View Solar to establish a site analysis of the poultry houses and explore the feasibility of installing solar panels. This collaborative effort allowed the team to develop a REAP grant application for \$29,848 to assist with the purchase and installation of the solar panels. The final project entailed the installation of 132 solar modules that were designed to generate roughly 85% of the total energy demanded by the pullet production houses or 35,000 kWh annually. Malcolm Farms has also obtained tax rebates, which led to increased financial return on this project. Since January 2014, the solar panels have generated over 30,000 kWh for the farm operation.

Following the establishment of this REAP project and the disbursement of funds, Malcolm Farms presented information about this project in a seminar setting at the Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College in Moorefield. The seminar led to increased interest in solar power for poultry farms in the region but also led to an additional farm in the community applying for a REAP grant in fiscal year 2014.

Obligation Amount: \$29,848 Grant

Date of Obligation: July 26, 2013

Congressional District: Congresswoman Capito, District 2; Senators Rockefeller and Manchin

Partners: Pendleton Community Bank, Natural Capital Investment Fund, Mountain View Solar, NRCS

Demographics: Moorefield, population 2510

Impact: This project supported the development of a renewable energy source for a poultry farm owner. The project also led to increased interest in solar power and the REAP program.