



NYSERDA awards \$50,000 to farm for solar hot water systems

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The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has awarded \$50,000 in funding for two solar hot water systems at The Berry Farm, that will send water warmed by the sun to plant roots in greenhouse beds.

Support for the farm's solar hot water systems was provided through NYSERDA's Solar Thermal Incentive Program, utilizing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

"A solar hot water system is an excellent clean-energy technology for users of large amounts of warm water, such as The Berry Farm greenhouses," said Francis Murray Jr., president and CEO of NYSERDA. "NYSERDA's solar thermal incentive program, which aligns with governor Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative, helps make this renewable energy solution affordable for businesses."

The systems are made up of a ground-mounted array of 20 solar collectors plus two highly insulated, custom-made underground storage tanks. They reduce the farm's use of fossil fuels for heating water by 60 percent and decrease its hot water cost by \$3,500 annually while eliminating the release into the atmosphere of more than 40 tons of carbon.

The Berry Farm uses the solar hot water systems to grow 40 types of greens and cool weather vegetables. The system will eventually provide heat to four of the five greenhouses on site, carrying it through underground pipes from the storage tanks that keep the water temperatures warm during the winter.

Joe Gilbert, owner of The Berry Farm, said, "The Berry Farm is looking for ways to cut fossil fuel use while growing winter vegetables, and at the same time trying to provide a product that is affordable to everyone in the community."

The solar hot water systems, installed by The Radiant Store located at the RPI Technology Park in Troy, will be showcased at an event at The Berry Farm on October 28 to promote sustainable living and healthy food choices and to raise funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). Terry Moag, owner of the Radiant Store, is donating a portion of his profits from the sale of the solar hot water systems to the JDRF.

Moag put the storage tanks underground because locating large storage vessels inside the greenhouses would have reduced valuable square footage needed for growing plants.

"This storage approach allowed us to scale very large systems and maximize energy production while at the same time satisfy the customer's requirement to have minimal impact on his growing operation," said Moag.

Solar thermal incentives through NYSERDA's Solar Thermal Program are granted first-come, first

served, and applications will be accepted until Dec. 31, 2015 or until the funds are fully committed. The program provides incentives of up to \$4,000 per site for eligible single- and multi-family residences and up to \$25,000 per site for eligible commercial and nonprofit customers.

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