

Ohio

Business and Cooperative Services | Rural Energy for America Program

Ohio Grain Farm Gets Positive “Jolt” From Solar Energy Grant



Doug Goyings stands near the ground-mounted solar array he installed on his northwest Ohio grain farm with help from a USDA Rural Energy for America Program grant. USDA Photo.

North of town just beyond the “Welcome to Paulding” sign, Goyings Farms, with its towering array of grain storage bins, is hard to miss.

Roots run deep into the Ohio soil on this rural grain production farm, and on a warm spring day Doug Goyings reflects with pride about how his grandfather settled this land in 1884, establishing not only a farm, but also a legacy spanning 140 years and five generations of his family.

“My grandparents came here to farm and didn’t ever want to leave,” said Doug. “They

came here to produce food for people and to carry on that tradition we must continue to get more efficient so we can grow more crops.”

That tradition of feeding people is evident in the grains grown and shipped annually from the farm, with their corn being milled for livestock feed, their wheat ground as flour for cookies and crackers, and their soybeans shipped to Japan for uses there.

But Doug says that farms now are larger and more expensive, and they need more help. Finding ways to save money is always a challenge, but remaining profitable is important to ensure the farm would be there for his son and beyond. That’s when Doug decided to invest in solar energy.

He connected with the Ohio USDA Rural Development team to apply for a Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant to purchase a renewable energy system that would lower costs and strengthen resiliency of his farm’s operations.

After receiving the grant in 2023, Doug installed a 288-panel, 152-kilowatt ground mounted solar array, and the impact has been almost immediate, especially when it comes to running its grain dryer which uses most of the electricity.

Goyings Farms – Rural Energy for America Program

“Right now, the farm is banking its stored solar energy with a local electric company, and we don’t anticipate having an electric bill until the end of the year,” said Doug. “Our farm dries nearly 300,000 bushels of corn per year and the solar installed through the REAP grant will provide all of the electricity required to dry it.”

Joining the family business when he graduated high school in 1975, Doug expressed a sense of quiet satisfaction in being self-sufficient. Whether it’s owning a fleet of trucks to transport grain to distribution points or storing fertilizer on site instead of relying on a local distributor to deliver it – being a successful generational farmer means a willingness to try new things.

His motivation to apply for the grant was to pay for electricity, and the grant pushed the farm’s cash flow “over the edge” according to Doug, who is thankful for the REAP program because the solar pays for nearly 100 percent of the farm’s electrical costs.

“It’s a long-term investment of 30 to 40 years, but we are looking at the ‘long game,’” said Doug. “Solar adds to the profitability of the farm and creates longevity with the hope that future generations can continue to grow the farm and carry on the tradition.”

Obligation: \$112,262

Obligation Date: September 26, 2023

Congressional: U.S. Rep. Bob Latta (OH-05); U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance

Impact: Energy efficiency and cost savings for family grain production farm in rural NW Ohio.