

Tour of Solar Power on Local Farms

Many California farmers and ranchers are finding that the benefits of going solar are too great to pass up. Several farms and ranches in our region have recently installed solar electricity, or photovoltaic, systems for their irrigation pumps, shops, and homes. It is not only an environmental solution to our energy problems but also can be more efficient and economical. In fact, even if you don't have a photovoltaic system on your property you may be getting the "overflow" energy from your neighbors system.

Farm and ranch partners with *Capay Valley Grown* and participants in the Capay Valley Vision Agriculture Task Force have been working to improve profitability of farming and ranching in this area. A solar tour and seminar of three local farms, which are using solar power to decrease the cost of farming, has been arranged by Sierra Solar Systems. The tour is open to everyone and will take place on Thursday, March 10 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The tour will begin at FreeHeart Farm in Esparto, visit McDonald Orchards north of Capay, and end at Full Belly Farm north of Guinda.

This will be a practical tour of working systems. Farmers will be on hand to talk about their own experiences with solar energy and how it has helped them to become more self-sufficient. The seminar will feature several experts in solar: Jonathan Hill, senior solar electric engineer with Sierra Solar Systems; Jesse Vanderhoof, photovoltaic specialist at Solar Depot; Andy Black, financial analyst, OnGrid Solar; Kevin Boedecker of Solar Pro; and Jerry Shafer, solar electric installer from Affinity Energy System. Together, this team has over 50 years of experience in solar electric systems. These experts will be able to answer your questions about solar power and explain the benefits in practical terms.

Directions (You must provide your own transportation.)

FreeHeart Farm is at 24203 County Road 22 in Esparto. The farm is 1 mile past the Esparto Cemetery. Turn left at the FreeHeart Farm road sign and go to the furthest house from the road.

McDonald Orchards is at 20179 County Road 79A north of Capay. Go west on County Road 79 and turn left onto 79A. Address is on the fence post.

Full Belly Farm is two miles north of Guinda at the end of County Road 43.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Paul Muller at Full Belly Farm 796-2214 or Sierra Solar Systems at (888)-ON-SOLAR online at www.sierrasolar.com.