# Solar system for quot poultry farm quot in ghana pdf

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The ever-evolving modern poultry house has gained numerous energy efficiencies over the last few years. Improvements in tightening techniques and insulation technology and in ventilation systems, control systems, lighting and heating--almost all areas of input costs have received much attention and have seen great improvements.

Now, with the current efforts in rainwater harvesting being explored and utilized on National Poultry Technology Center test farms, one might be tempted to say there is not much fat left to trim out of the modern poultry farm. However, solar energy also can be added to this list. We are not talking about solar heating but actually using solar energy to generate electricity.

Solar electricity is not a new idea. Everyone has used and benefits from photovoltaic (PV or solar cell) power generation. You probably have a calculator on your desk that uses PV cells to power it instead of batteries. The technology of converting the sun"s light energy into electricity has been around for a long time and is continuing to evolve and improve. In fact, this idea is not even new to poultry housing in the Southeast. There are currently more than 25 poultry farm solar installations going on in north Alabama alone.

There are not many things in this world we can say are truly free, but the sun"s light energy is one of them. With the increasing cost of power being driven further and faster by increasing bird demands, it is time poultry growers seriously consider opportunities in solar power. The problem is that a system that harnesses this "free energy" is anything but free. In fact, it can be very costly, particularly if done incorrectly without a full understanding of how it all works.

If done properly with all the right supporting factors, however, a grower has the opportunity to lock in his or her future electricity costs at a constant lower rate while paying for the system. Once a system is paid for, a grower can thereafter be virtually self-sustaining in electricity well into the future with little more than the cost of insurance and maintenance for the solar system. With current electricity costs for high-wind-speed houses continuing to climb, this can equal a substantial boost to the grower"s bottom line.

The biggest misunderstanding with solar energy in poultry operations is that most think you are directly using the electricity being produced, thus allowing you to be "off the grid," totally independent of the power company. While this is technically possible to do, it is totally impractical and currently economically infeasible for a modern poultry farm. There are several reasons for this impracticality.

For these reasons, it is not feasible or smart for growers to consider any system that unplugs them from the power company. So the question is, Just how does this solar system save me money? The short answer to the question is through net metering.

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Power companies have to produce the power you purchase from them. They have to build and maintain the distribution system. And, they have to anticipate and react to ever-increasing demands for electricity. They do this at a very successful level and for surprisingly low cost to the end user, especially if you consider everything that goes into your ability to plug into your wall and get power at any time.

However, the increasing costs of production and increasing demands often mean ever-increasing power bills, as the utility companies try to keep up with demand. Many people may not realize that utility companies are regulated by the public service commissions or legislatures of the states they do business in. This regulation controls just how much the utility companies can charge for the power they supply. That means that utility companies are always in search of newer, better and less expensive ways to produce and distribute electricity. Enter solar electricity production.

Solar energy has proved to be a highly efficient, low maintenance way to produce electricity. In fact, many utility companies are investing in large solar production facilities, or "solar farms," to harness the sun"s free energy to produce electricity. Any method of electricity production is most efficient when you can produce the electricity close to the same areas of the highest usage, thus decreasing distribution costs in the form of power lines, substations, etc.

If a grower is not directly using the electricity he or she is producing with a solar system, then just how does it all work? Simple; it is all about the power meter. We are probably all familiar with how the meter works--when you use electricity from the power company, the power meter counts those watts and adds them up over time, turning that number into kilowatt hours (kWh), the unit by which you get charged for electricity.

Now imagine if you could turn that meter backward. This is in essence how net metering works. There are several forms of the actual metering systems depending on the utility company in question, but the principle is the same. As the solar system produces power and feeds it into the power grid, the meter flows in the direction of the grower. When the grower uses power from the grid, the meter flows in the direction of the utility company.

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Web: https://www.sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 8613816583346