

Solar Checklist

For Rhode Island Farmers



Preliminary Questions

1. How much electricity is currently consumed on your property and how much does it cost, monthly and yearly?
2. Have you performed an energy audit for your farm? If so, have you made any of the recommended efficiency upgrades?
3. Are you interested in offsetting your electric bill or are you looking to sell some or all of the electricity?
4. Are the electrical meters on your property commercial, residential or a mix of both?
5. Do you have a south facing roof? If not, is there a portion of your property with open space that might accommodate a ground mounted solar PV system?
6. If you are considering a ground mounted system, have you identified how much land you will use for the project? Will you continue to use the property for farming?
7. Do you want to own the system or lease it?
8. Have you received at least three quotes from solar companies?



Purchasing and Contracting

1. Are you comfortable with the installer's knowledge and experience?
2. Is the installer registered with the RI Secretary of State? Does the installer hold a General Contractor's license and a Renewable Energy Professional Certificate?
3. Does the installer have credible references that they are willing to provide?
4. Is the installer adequately insured to protect you as well as the company's employees and subcontractors?
5. Is the electrician who is performing the work subcontracted or are they an employee of the installation company?
6. What is the length of the workmanship warranty in the contract?
7. Does the contract include performance specifications for the system being installed, including an estimate of the amount of electricity the system will produce? Is a performance guarantee included?
8. Does the contract clearly lay out what is included and what is not included in the total project costs?
9. Were you presented with options for RI specific incentives such as the Renewable Energy Growth Program and Renewable Energy Fund, the RI Farm Energy Program, and the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE)?

10. Were you presented options for national incentives such as the 30% Federal Investment Tax Credit and USDA Rural Energy for America Program?
11. Does the proposed payment schedule protect you by allowing payment to be withheld until the system: 1) passes local code inspections, 2) receives utility interconnection approval, and 3) is shown to be operating properly?
12. Is there a tax liability associated with any of the incentives that you will receive?

Post Installation

1. Has the installer left descriptive materials and equipment operating manuals as reference materials?
2. Has the installer tested and activated the system?
3. Have all necessary inspections occurred?

Typical Solar Installation Steps

Steps	Role
Research contractors and compare bids	Customer
Design system (site visit and usage evaluation to determine size)	Installer
Sign contract	Customer
Apply for interconnection; submit application(s) to National Grid	Installer
Apply for a Solar Permit with the City/Town	Installer
Apply for RI State Incentives	Installer
Install the solar PV system	Installer
Town/City onsite system inspection; submit approval to utility	Installer
Utility onsite interconnection/meter inspection	National Grid
Turn system on upon written approval from utility	Customer
Receive first utility bill post-installation	Customer

Additional Resources

1. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Programs and Incentives for Farmers
<http://www.energy.ri.gov/policies-programs/programs-incentives/farms.php>
2. RI Farm Energy Program
<http://www.rifarmenergy.org/ri-ag-ep.htm>
3. Rural Energy for America Program
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency>
4. Video - "Choosing a Solar Installer" - <https://www.cesa.org/projects/sustainable-solar/resources/resource/choosing-a-solar-installer-video>
5. Subscribe to the RI Farm Energy Newsletter – send an email to info@rifarmenergy.org to be added



This information is brought to you by the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources. Written by Bryan Evans.
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