

Solar ensures sustainable milk production - and reduces rocketing energy bills

David Stevenson, Mole Energy



Butland Farm is a dairy business, generating sustainable energy and earning more for its milk, thanks to the power of solar.

Over the last decade, the Coytes have completed a number of projects at the farm, near Modbury, focusing on economic and environmental resilience. They joined forces with fellow farmers, the Millers, to create a Contract Farming Agreement and converted the farm to dairying. The dairy herd now has 530 Jersey and crossbred cows.

In 2014 a new dairy was built in the centre of the 540 acre farm, utilising a modified New Zealand-style milking system. Within the 400 acre grazing platform is a simple herringbone parlour, a winter shelter and the necessary silage and slurry storage. The remaining 110 acres is used for winter fodder, environmental stewardship and diversification projects.

A perfect pairing

Butland Farm supply Arla, which uses the farm's milk for products including the Cravendale, Anchor and Lurpak brands.

Jon told us: "The cows produce 4,500 litres a year, not the most, but it is the quality rather than quantity with our milk. The breeding of the cows means the milk has a very high butterfat and protein content which is what Arla pay for and what they require for their product mix."

With the energy price savings, the business aims to recover the investment over the next three to four years. This was thanks to the decision to install a 50kW solar array with Mole Energy in January 2023.

Jon explained: "We had to look at ways to reduce our electricity costs given the rocketing prices. We considered wind turbines, but they would have been difficult to gain planning permission for, as we are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

"Solar was an appealing and feasible alternative. Generating sustainable energy and earning more for our milk is a great success. But **what surprises me most is the amount of 'free' energy** our panels produce, even on the most miserable of days!"

A great job with Mole Energy

Jon contacted Mole Energy and spoke to our surveyor, adding: "He did a great job of turning it around quickly. He was easy to work with, thought outside the box with challenges and came up with good solutions to the questions we raised. The installation itself went smoothly and to plan.

"In the end, we chose Mole Energy because of the **sense of continuity and security that comes with being part of Mole Valley Farmers**. Mole has been around for years and we are confident they will be here in the future, too.

"This reassured us when we paid the deposit as I didn't feel comfortable releasing monies to a young company, with little trading history, in case they disappeared with it. We had no such worries with Mole Energy."



Find out how much you could save with solar and call our specialist agricultural consultants today



01803 732946
info@moleenergy.com

