

Utilities offer a range of energy for farms, processors

By Christine Souza

Porterville Citrus Inc., a full-service packer, is now saving several thousand dollars in energy costs after investing in energy-efficient equipment through Southern California Edison's Ag Efficiency Plus program.

Dick Clayton, facility manager at Porterville Citrus, organized an energy audit of the company's Terra Bella facility in the fall of 2006. Impressed by the results, he brought Ag Efficiency Plus staff back to discuss ways he could save money on the refrigeration system at the company's new Exeter plant. He was quoted a potential reduction of 76,347 kilowatt-hours per year, a savings of nearly \$7,000 annually, with the installation of an electronic compressor sequencer on their refrigeration system. The company received a cash incentive to help offset the cost of the equipment.

"I thought I might be able to bring down my electricity costs somehow. The Ag Efficiency Plus team came in and showed me exactly how I could do it," Clayton said. "The savings they quoted me were impressive and the rebate offer clinched the deal."

With more than \$4 million in rebates available, the Ag Efficiency Plus program provides Southern California Edison's agricultural and food-processing customers with free energy audits and cash incentives for energy-efficient equipment. The program is a component of Southern California Edison's Agricultural Energy Efficiency Program and is operated by Global Energy Partners LLC and EnSave Inc.

"Through the Ag Efficiency Plus program we've found success in the areas of irrigation, field crops, tree crops, greenhouses, packing facilities and cold storage. The program offers services and financial incentives to address all aspects of a farmer's operation," said Ravi Parikh, EnSave program representative. "We suggest to customers the most efficient equipment to install and give them the rebate money. We support that with the fact that they can save energy. Increasing energy effi-

ciency is money in their pocket."

Ag Efficiency Plus offers incentives on more than 160 energy-efficient measures and free on-site energy audits to help agricultural customers identify opportunities for saving energy and money. Audits and rebates are available for: dairies; greenhouses; livestock farms; refrigerated warehousing and storage; crop farms; orchards; agricultural and food-processing facilities; other agricultural facilities; and water supply and irrigation systems. Rebates are available for installation of energy-efficient lighting, exterior lighting, custom lighting, air conditioning, pumping, refrigeration, ventilation, cooling, controls and motors.

Visalia dairy producer Ron Koetsier took advantage of the program by installing 66 energy-efficient ventilation fans to keep his cows cool during the hot Central Valley summers. He is expected to save nearly 100,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, a savings of \$10,000 each year. He received a \$13,200 cash incentive through Ag Efficiency Plus, which, in combination with energy savings, will help pay for the equipment in just two years, Parikh said.

"People should take advantage of energy-efficiency programs if they can. There are a lot of opportunities out there," said Karen Mills, California Farm Bureau Federation associate counsel and public utilities director.

Ag Efficiency Plus has a target of saving more than 32,000 megawatt-hours of electricity and reducing demand by more than 7 megawatts, Parikh said. To date, the program has reported energy savings of about 11.5 million kilowatt-hours and saved customers more than \$900,000 in electricity costs, with 124 food producers and processors participating.

The Ag Efficiency Plus program is scheduled to last until the end of 2008 or until the funds are depleted, Parikh said. To ensure that these types of programs continue in the future, the California Public Utilities Com-

mission issued a ruling to assess the current energy-efficiency programs and determine how better to deliver programs to customers that can result in substantial energy-efficiency improvements. The effort will reach out to a broad range of agricultural organizations, agencies, utilities and others that can affect the ability of customers to modify their energy usage.

For more information about the Ag Efficiency Plus program, call the program hotline at (800) 791-7541 or visit the program Web site at www.agefficiencyplus.com.

To help businesses save money and manage energy costs, Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric offer a wide variety of rebates and incentives for retrofit projects as well as incentives and design assistance for new construction projects.

Southern California Edison also offers energy-efficiency programs like the Pumping System Efficiency Test Program and rebates for dairy farms, motors, vari-

able frequency drive systems and irrigation. Programs for agricultural customers are described on the utility's Web site at www.sce.com/RebatesandSavings/Agriculture. For more information, contact Southern California Edison at (800) 896-1245.

Energy-efficiency programs provided by PG&E include the Dairy Energy Efficiency Program, Ag Pumping Efficiency Program, Wine Industry Efficiency Solutions Program and Mercury Vapor Yard Light Exchange Program.

For other information, PG&E recommends that farmers and business owners call their account representative or the business customer service center at (800) 468-4743.

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