

Workshop to focus on solar-powered pumping systems

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Alfred University's Center for Environmental and Energy Research (CEER) will host a one-day workshop, "Solar Power in Agriculture: A Demonstration of Photovoltaic-Powered Water Pumping on New York Farms," from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 6. The workshop will focus on the installation and use of solar-powered water pumps to provide water for agricultural use. The program includes a demonstration of how the pumps work to draw water from a well or a pond; both systems are installed on the Alfred State College Farm. Sessions begin at 9 a.m. with site visits and demonstrations at Alfred State College's Farm Laboratory. Lunch on the Alfred University campus is from noon to 1 p.m. with an afternoon session from 1-4 p.m. on the AU campus featuring presentations and discussions by the speakers, including: Windy Dankoff, founder, Dankoff Solar Products, Inc.; Gene Bertsche of Bekaert ECD Solar Systems; Roy Butler, owner, Four Winds Renewable Energy; and Dr. Christopher Sinton, acting director of CEER. CEER and Four Winds Renewable Energy, based in Arkport, obtained funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to demonstrate the use of photovoltaic-powered systems for watering dairy and beef cattle. Sinton, who is one of the researchers for the project, said that solar-powered pumps are used in the western United States, but are not yet widely used in the Northeast. The goal of the CEER-Four Winds project is to demonstrate that "this environmentally friendly technology can give regional dairy farmers a competitive edge by providing a reliable and inexpensive way of supplying water for their livestock." Advantages of these systems include opening up remote pastures for grazing that have no surface water resources and for providing water for animals while keeping them out of streams and ponds. Partners in the project, in addition to CEER and Four Winds Renewable Energy, include Colin McCarthy at the Alfred State College Farm Laboratory and Bekaert ECD Solar Systems. Additional information may be obtained by calling Chris Sinton at 607-871-2642 or by e-mailing him at sintoncw@alfred.edu. Those wishing to register for the workshop may do so by mailing their name, company or institution name, address and e-mail address to Susan Meacham, Alfred University, Alfred, NY 14802 or by e-mailing her at meachams@alfred.edu. Pre-registration is not required, but it is appreciated.