

Mpumalanga farm adopts solar to cut diesel use

Namoneng Farm, a citrus operation under the Lona Group in Mpumalanga, South Africa, has adopted a solar and battery energy system to address long-standing power supply issues. Following a packhouse upgrade, the farm faced significant energy constraints, with the national utility, Eskom, unable to provide additional capacity. During peak season, the farm resorted to diesel generators, consuming up to 500 litres daily.

In response, a 610kWp solar photovoltaic (PV) system combined with 1200kWh of battery storage was installed. The hybrid system integrates solar power, Eskom supply, and backup generators, although the generators are now primarily reserved for emergency use during prolonged periods of low sunlight. The installation has significantly reduced the farm's reliance on diesel and associated maintenance costs while improving energy stability throughout the year.

The project was executed by Broadreach, with the system designed for future scalability and integrated to work alongside the farm's existing infrastructure. The installation was carried out in partnership with renewable energy contractor Ijika Services. Before implementation, an energy audit was conducted to assess the farm's seasonal power consumption patterns. The system supports the packhouse during harvest and channels surplus energy to irrigation pump stations during the off-season.

Remote access to the system enables farm management to monitor and manage power usage, allowing for operational efficiency. The energy transition is expected to generate substantial cost savings and reduce carbon emissions.

The project was financed through a structured model involving a power purchase agreement for the solar components and a lease-to-own arrangement for the batteries and distribution networks. This approach removed the need for upfront capital investment by the farm. Ongoing monitoring and technical support are part of the long-term service commitment to ensure the consistent performance of the system.

For more information:

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