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Last Updated: 3:52 pm | Sunday, October 7, 2007

Investment already starting to pay off

BY MICHAEL D. CLARK | MCLARK@ENQUIRER.COM

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WAYNE TWP. - This former bank executive is used to sizing up business investments under a sharp, practical glare.

So when Raymond L. Buse Jr. took a shine to solar energy for his thoroughbred horse breeding farm, his environmentally motivated interests came in second place.

"Putting aside our need to clean up the environment, which I do believe, I'm also a businessman and this is a good investment," says Buse from his 80-acre Meadow Springs Farm in Clermont County.

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Started nearly four years ago, Buse has wanted his 19-stall horse breeding headquarters to be state-of-the-art - including fans in the stables to keep the horses comfortable. To that end, he first explored using wind power as an energy source, but found solar energy to be more practical.

"I spent a year or two trying to locate somebody who was an expert in the solar energy business," Buse says.

He eventually settled on Dove Tail Solar and Wind, based near Athens, Ohio, which has installed dozens of solar energy systems around the state.

Constructed at the beginning of the year, the horse farm's solar panels and other equipment cost approximately \$100,000. But that was offset in part by a state grant of \$40,000 and a \$20,000 federal tax write-off, he says.

"It has already reduced our energy costs, and my estimate is that we are saving about \$350 to \$400 per month. I'll have a better handle on the figures next year, but I'm estimating it will save about 5 percent of our energy costs for a year," Buse says.

This summer's record heat and abundant sunlight have made Buse's move especially well-timed.

"We've had so little rain this summer and so much sunlight that it has worked well," he says.

Al Frasz, vice president of Dove Tail, says many other horse breeding farms run standard electric service to their buildings.

But Buse didn't want the noise, expense and difficulty of using back-up power generators, so he opted for solar.

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THE ENQUIRER/JOSEPH FUQUA II

Raymond L. Buse Jr. wanted solar energy at his Meadow Springs Farm thoroughbred horse-breeding headquarters in Clermont County. So now Go for the Diamond (left) and his other horses are cooled by fans in the stables powered by the sun.

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