



Solar energy in the food and beverage industry

JUNE 25, 2015

With consolidation on the rise and incentives for the food and beverage sector to reduce operating costs and increase cash flow, switching to solar power has become a way for companies to accomplish both while also becoming energy efficient and environmentally responsible. Manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage facilities in commercial buildings, particularly those with large rooftops, can benefit from the installation of solar panels. A number of pioneers such as Campbell's Soup, Mars Inc., US Foods and Del Monte Foods, have already installed panels on many of their buildings.

Federal and state tax credits are available to companies that install solar panels to generate energy, allowing these companies to quickly recapture their investments, and making converting to solar even more attractive. The federal government allows taxpayers a 30 percent investment tax credit on the net system cost, which can be used to offset the regular and alternative minimum tax. Any unused portion of the credit can be carried forward to future years. In addition, certain states allow a tax credit against income tax and property taxes. Solar panel installation costs can also depreciate across five years using an accelerated depreciation method against the approximately 25-year determined life of a solar panel.

Editor's Note: Watch for the full article in the August 2015 issue of Water Technology magazine.

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