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Solar Photovoltaic Installation on Center Pivot Corners in the San Luis Valley, Colorado



The San Luis Valley boasts an average of 320 days of sunshine per year, and its average daily insolation (solar radiation intensity) is one of the highest in the nation. This leads to a big opportunity for local communities to develop photovoltaic arrays to help to defray energy costs. One of the biggest consumers of electric energy in the valley are center pivot irrigation system operators. The San Luis Valley RC&D Council teamed up with the International Center for Appropriate & Sustainable Technology (iCAST), XCEL Energy and six local farmers to install six 10 kW Solar PV systems in center pivot corners. The financial side of the installations came from a \$75,000.00 Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service that San Luis

Valley RC&D procured, as well as rebates from XCEL energy and a percentage was cost shared by each farmer. This allows each farmer to not only defray their irrigation system energy costs, but also to secure a profit from the unused land taken up by center pivot corners.