



Investing in Solar Power is Investing in Texas



It's no secret that farmers in Texas and across the United States are **facing challenges**. However, throughout our history, Texas farmers have shown grit and never shied away from a new adventure or a challenge. That rugged individualist determination has inspired my family as well. We find ourselves grateful to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior for the opportunity we had to raise cattle in the past, we're grateful for the opportunity we have to raise sheep on solar fields, and we're grateful for our small role in harnessing solar energy that's powering homes, businesses, and farms across the Lone Star State.

Solar power reliably delivers affordable energy, creates economic opportunities, and provides a means of multiple-use land resource management. Blending the management of land resources on a **multiple-use** basis provides a method of balancing energy, agriculture, and biodiversity needs to benefit the greatest number of Texans. Furthermore, for my family, partnering with a solar farm has enabled me to realize **my lifelong dream**, living life as a full-time farmer.

Through this process, I've embraced my role as a solar shepherdess and learned what to look out for when it comes to maintaining solar panels. For example, I know when solar panels are facing the wrong way or need attention. These are new skills that I never expected to learn during my time as a farmer but are helping ensure our family's farm succeeds in a 21st century clean energy economy.



Solar power also has helped ensure that as farmers, we are good stewards of our land. By raising a flock of sheep among our solar panels, we're helping improve soil health and foster healthy ecosystems, all while managing vegetation through **natural, effective means**.

Through leasing agreements, low panel maintenance, and energy bill savings, Elm Branch solar farm is strengthening our local economy, while delivering affordable energy to Texans.

According to recent reports, utility-scale solar power is increasingly **competitive** with gas power generation; and, the solar industry providing **over 10,000 jobs** to Texans—and that number is only **expected to rise**.

Additionally, solar panels bolster our grid when it's pushed to its limits during the Summer. In June, as the Texas summer temperatures settled in to

the triple digits and energy demand reached new highs, solar power provided **nearly one-fifth** of the state's power grid needs. This helped us keep our air conditioners and lights running during a summer with **record-breaking** heat.

Lately, we've heard some negative commentary about how solar energy threatens farmlands, the economy, reliability, and wrecks **rural lands** and ecosystems. However, our experience has been that solar panels use a **small proportion** of land, offer multiple-use opportunities, provide for grazing acreage, and **empower biodiversity** by providing refuge for plants and animals.

Texans don't need "Rich Men North of Richmond" to tell us what to think, we make up our own minds. That's why it's not surprising that **many Texans** support a shift to solar power, net-metering, and incentives for homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar. **The bottom line is our farm is a case study in how solar energy can transform our lives and livelihoods.**

MEET AMANDA STOFFELS

Amanda Stoffels and her family lease part of their land for the Elm Branch solar farm, which is located about 50 miles south of Dallas. The faith-centered family has raised cattle in the past and currently raises sheep on a 1,350-acre solar project that helps power Texas homes and businesses.



Please reach out if you would like to share your support for solar power.
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