



Rod Morrison's pigs "help" install solar panels on his farm outside of Powell, Wyoming.

## **Rod Morrison - Powell, Wyoming (December, 2017)**

Everything I do on my farm electrically is solar powered. I'm a certified organic meat purveyor, I sell it all over the United States. So, I have to have large freezers. I'm net metered, so my system is grid-tied. How much energy I can make is all about how much sun I get. I've got over 110, 280 kW panels. I had it installed in June, but it didn't get turned on until the end of August. Right now, my panels are running on two meters.

For me, using solar energy is about climate change. People say it's just a natural cycle, and it is, it's called the carbon cycle. The planet seems to warm up every couple million years. The problem is that this time we caused it. I'm okay with volcanoes and Mother Nature, but not what we're doing.

We've known that CO<sub>2</sub> is a greenhouse gas for a long time, but we're too addicted to the way we live to stop making it. Part of what we need to do is stop. We need a hard stop and we need to realize that we can do fine with a lot less. We don't need as much as we think.

Somehow that story needs to be told. The only way the story is going to be told is amongst us. It's not going to be told on the news or be broadcast on the radio. This idea of continual growth and continual development is over. Everything that we do as humans, we push it down the road, we kick the can. We push it down to the next generation to fix. We can't keep doing that or there won't be time to fix it. We need to change now. This is my attempt to try. I've spent my paper dollars on solar panels and made myself less a part of that system. I'm still a part of it, though. I'm still drawing from the grid at night.

Changes can come in different ways. Wars can create change, for example. I see solar as a peaceful opportunity to change. Wyoming is infamous for saying that the free market will cause change, when they don't really know what that means. Free market is harsh. Free market is really harsh. It doesn't care about people or communities.

Our whole life is about energy. Right now we're robbing the earth to get it. We don't need to be doing that. There's plenty of energy on the planet. When you think about what we do, it's important to understand the kind of energy it takes to get work done. If you pushed your car as far as it could go on a gallon of gas, you would be using the same number of calories in that gallon of gasoline to do the work. Calories are a measure of energy. The idea that time and money are related, they're not. It's energy related. All energy comes down to the calorie. Everything can be converted to calories.

Using calories that are created from nature in the sense that they come from the sun makes sense because all energy on the earth comes from the sun. Mother Nature cannot consume CO<sub>2</sub> as fast as we burn it. The problem with CO<sub>2</sub> is that human beings can't see it, can't taste it, so they don't pay attention to it. If CO<sub>2</sub> was purple, we might be paying more attention and everyone would install solar panels and do what they could to change how much we produce.

I like to think of myself as a Lincoln Republican. The Republican Party was founded on the idea of conservation. I believe that I am part of the natural system and we have to act accordingly. Solar fits into that.

I don't know that solar is a consideration any more. I'd say it's mandatory. You can't even do an economic analysis on it. The economics really doesn't matter. It's bigger than that. We need to start living in a world that's sustainable.