

# OLD LYME

## THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACT SUCCESS STORIES

No.  
517



### JUDGE'S FARM

Old Lyme, CT

Agriculture & Dairy



Since opening in 1999, **Judge's Farm** in Old Lyme has grown from a backyard operation and Christmas tree farm into a perennial plant powerhouse that ships its products throughout Southern New England and Eastern New York. Starting as a family business run by two brothers, it has expanded to employ some 15 employees each year at the height of the season.

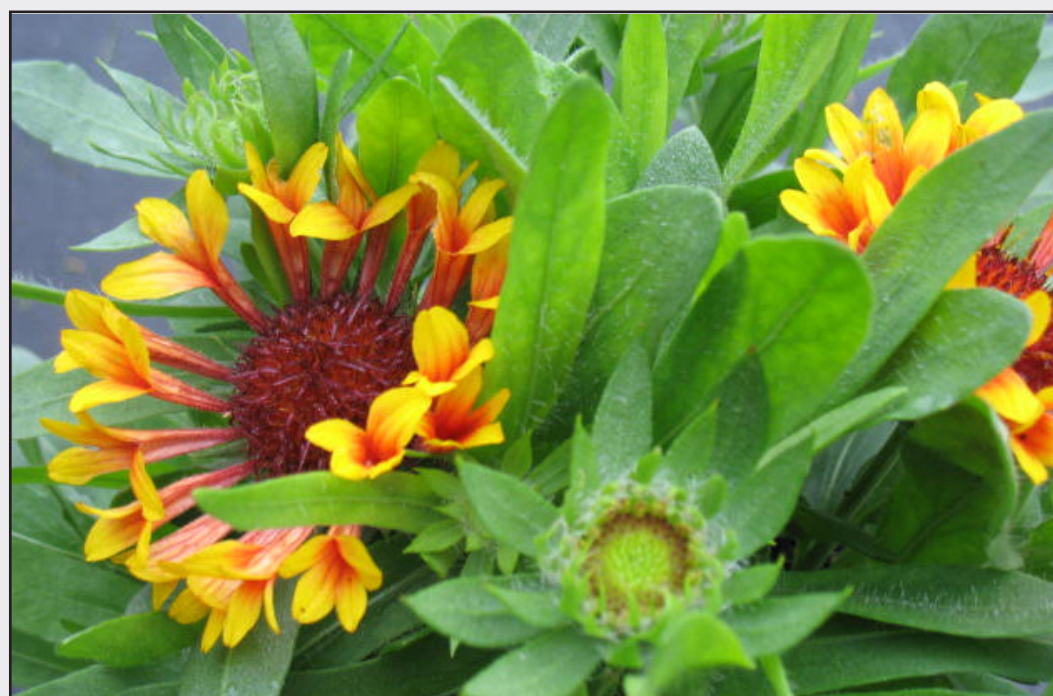
But as the farm has expanded, so too has its demand for electricity. Farm owners began looking for a solution to help make their green business even greener and help control their growing electrical costs.

Working with the **CT Dept. of Agriculture's Agriculture Viability Grant Program**, which is funded by the **Community Investment Act**, Judge's Farm was able to secure a \$36,000 grant. This, coupled with federal funding, allowed the farm to install a \$118,000 photovoltaic solar system.

The system was purchased from another local Connecticut business and consists of four large solar arrays. Judge's Farm put some Yankee ingenuity and sweat equity into the project to make it even more efficient. Originally designed to generate 13kW of power, by mounting the arrays on poles, they can tilt the arrays as the seasons change to allow for maximum solar capture.

Since going online in December of 2009, the system has generated an average of 19kW and has successfully powered over 90% of the farm's energy needs, including three irrigation wells, a potting machine, office computers, lights and greenhouses.

Because of the funding opportunities made possible by the Community Investment Act, farms like Judge's have the opportunity to **increase profits and transition to renewable energy sources.**



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The Community Investment Act, enacted in 2005, stimulates private investment to protect our natural, agricultural, and historic resources, and to assist affordable housing. CIA funds come from a surcharge on real estate document recording fees. They are then invested in agriculture viability, dairy farm support, historic preservation, open space, farmland, affordable housing, Local Capital Improvement Projects and Town Clerk records management.