FEATURE STORY

JORDAN ENERGY & FOOD ENTERPRISES

Harvesting the Power of the Sun

By Michelle Rivera, Senior Communications Manager

From left: Bill Jordan, Founder and CEO, Jordan Energy; Kelly Strickland, Vice President of Operations, Five Crowns Marketing; Bernie Jordan, West Coast Sales Manager, Jordan Energy

For growers across the country, rising electricity costs continue to challenge already slim margins, making energy efficiency and sustainability more important than ever. But while solar energy has become an increasingly attractive solution, many agricultural operations face a major barrier before installation even begins: securing the financial resources to make large-scale energy investments possible.

For Jordan Energy, solving that challenge goes far beyond developing solar projects.

Founded in 2009 by William "Bill" Jordan and supported by his family, including his daughter Bernadette "Bernie" Jordan, Jordan Energy has built its reputation not only as a solar developer for agriculture but as one of the industry's most successful grant-writing partners for growers seeking renewable energy solutions.

With an impressive 97 percent grant success rate in the last two decades, Jordan Energy has transformed grant funding into one of its most powerful tools for strengthening family farms and accelerating the return on investment for ag solar projects.

Jordan Energy's mission has always been centered on supporting the long-term health of family agriculture.

"We were convinced that solar could save farmers significant money and strengthen their family farms," Bill said. "If you can lower or eliminate one of your largest operational costs—electricity—you create a stronger family business."

But Bill quickly recognized that for many growers, the biggest hurdle wasn't understanding the benefits of solar but rather it was affording the upfront costs. That realization led the company to make grant writing a cornerstone of its business model from the very beginning.

Jordan Energy wrote its first successful grant in 2009, and the company has consistently helped growers secure state and federal funding that dramatically lowers project costs ever since. The grant support can mean the difference between a project being financially out of reach or becoming a highly profitable and long-term investment.

It's no secret that grant writing is one of the most complex and time-intensive aspects of ag funding programs. Applications require intense documentation, strict compliance with program criteria and a deep understanding of government processes. But Jordan Energy has turned that complexity into one of its greatest strengths. With a 97 percent success rate, the company has only failed to secure grant funding on two occasions.

"We have the best grant-writing team in the country," Bill said. "The success rate stems from our strategic approach: writing grants specifically to match program scoring systems and ensuring that applications directly address evaluator priorities rather than wasting time on unnecessary details."

By understanding the technical language, financial requirements and administrative expectations of grant programs, such as U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding opportunities, Jordan Energy significantly increases approval odds for growers.

Just as importantly, the company manages nearly all of the paperwork itself.

"The biggest complaint we hear from farmers is that grants take too much paperwork and too much time," Bill explained. "We absorb that burden so growers aren't sacrificing valuable time out in the field."

Jordan Energy's grant-writing model is designed to reduce the financial risk for growers. The company typically requires only a refundable deposit to begin the grant process, which means growers can pursue significant funding opportunities with limited upfront commitment. If grant funding is not secured, the deposit is returned.

This approach has been particularly valuable for multi-phase projects, Bill explained, where growers often return for additional solar or battery expansions after seeing strong financial results from initial installations.

Talbott Farms: A Model for the Future

Jordan Energy's partnership with fifth-generation Talbott Farms, a member of Western Growers in Palisade, Colo., offers a compelling example of how grant expertise and innovative solar design can work together to preserve family farming.

Supported by a USDA Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP) grant secured through Jordan Energy, Talbott Farms developed a 423-kilowatt agrivoltaic tracking system elevated 15 feet above an acre of peach orchards, allowing the family to continue producing premium fruit while simultaneously generating renewable energy.

Rather than removing productive land from agriculture, this project created a dual-use system designed to protect crops from frost, hail, sunburn and water loss while creating additional revenue streams.

"I feel like the biggest misconception I hear when we talk to farmers is solar using prime farmland," Bernie said. "We don't use prime farmland. That's a big priority for our business, so I like to clear that up right away."

Bernie further explained that the company's projects often avoid the use of prime farmland, and instead use rooftops, underused acreage, pivot corners or agrivoltaic systems that combine agricultural production with energy generation. Battery storage is also becoming an increasingly important factor, especially as utility pricing structures evolve.

Talbott Farms' system is expected to become cashflow positive by year two, dramatically accelerating return on investment thanks to grant funding. In partnership with Colorado State University, the project is also producing critical research on crop quality, water efficiency and overall economic performance.