

## Mars Boasts Largest Solar Array in New Jersey

by Kristin Underwood, Sacramento, CA on 12. 1.09

The largest solar array on a food manufacturing plant that is. The Mars Chocolate North America Headquarters building now has 18 acres worth of solar panels offsetting all of those chocolaty emissions. The project, which was developed in partnership with PSEG allows Mars to purchase the output of the system and PSEG to still maintain ownership of the entire 18-acre solar garden - a financing system that is becoming more and more popular across the US.

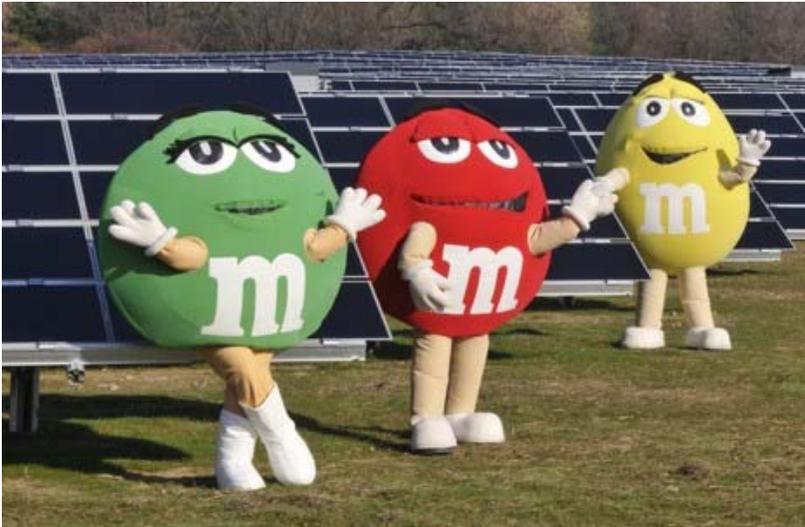


Image via: PSEG

Four months and 28,680 ground-mounted photovoltaic panels later, the Mars North America Headquarters has flipped the switch on their solar garden and now earns the distinction of largest solar array on a food manufacturing plant in New Jersey.

PSEG Solar Source, a subsidiary of PSEG worked with Mars on the project and currently maintains ownership of the system. The Mars manufacturing plant simply contracted for the output of the system, providing them with a fixed price for energy during peak hours. The system itself uses First Solar thin-film FS-2/75 watt panels, which were installed by juwi solar Inc.

New Jersey has committed to generating 20% its energy from renewable sources by 2020 and this project will contribute to that goal. To date, they have installed 100 MW worth of solar energy, second only to California. In addition to installing a 2MW system, Mars also renovated its onsite facility, which employs 1,200 people. The building is now eligible for LEED certification thanks to all of the upgrades, which include reducing water consumption by 30%, using 15% less electricity and using 20% recycled content in building materials.

28,000 photovoltaic panels provides roughly 2MW of power during peak hours, which amounts to only about 20% of the plants operating needs during peak hours. (Peak hours, by the way, are when most people are drawing energy from the grid, and the price of electricity is at its highest). Another way to look at it - this will reduce the plant emissions by roughly 1,000 metric tons or the equivalent of taking 190 cars off the road. No word yet on what that equivalent is in M&Ms.