The Northern Mariana Islands have one of the highest electrical utility rates in the United States, which is a huge barrier to profitability for shrimp and tilapia farmers, who must run air and water pumps 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With SARE funding, aquaculture farmer Pedro Ariola is showing his peers that solar power can be the solution.

With a 2009 SARE grant, Ariola installed solar panels that have taken him off the grid for 12 hours each day, cutting his monthly energy bill in half. This is significant considering energy accounts for 40 percent of aquaculture production costs.

When Ariola began this project, he was slowed by a lack of capacity to assist with renewable energy projects such as this—in fact, this project was the first of its kind in the Northern Mariana Islands. He had to go out and find the people with the expertise to help with design and installation of the system, and he had to purchase much of his equipment from the mainland United States.

Ariola’s experience has paid off in more ways than one. His success has caught the attention of other farmers who were discouraged with the high costs of aquaculture production. He is now fielding regular inquiries from fellow farmers and hosts tours of his operation. At least one other farmer has installed solar equipment as a result.

For more information on this project, see www.sare.org/projects, and search for project number FW09-006.
SARE Grants in Northern Mariana Islands

SARE has awarded a total of 24 grants in Northern Mariana Islands since 1988.

1 Research & Education Grant
1 On-Farm Research Grant
2 Professional Development Grants
20 Farmer/Rancher Grants

SARE’s Impact

- **53 percent** of producers report using a new production technique after reading a SARE publication.
- **79 percent** of producers said they improved soil quality through their SARE project.
- **64 percent** of producers said their SARE project helped them achieve higher sales.

Contact Us For More Information

SARE sustainable ag coordinators run state-level educational programs for Extension and other ag professionals, and many help grant applicants and recipients with planning and outreach. Visit [www.westernsare.org/n-marianas-islands](http://www.westernsare.org/n-marianas-islands) to learn more.

Solly Takai
NMC-CREES
sollyann.takai@marianas.edu
(670) 234-3276

For detailed information on SARE projects, go to [www.SARE.org](http://www.SARE.org)