

Benjamin Obdyke

Future Farmstead at University of Georgia

Sustainable living is a popular topic in the building industry and many organizations and institutions are using smart technologies and environmentally responsible products on homes and buildings that are not only sustainable, but also *functional*. The University of Georgia is leading such efforts by building a model home for sustainable living, so that students and visitors can learn about living smart and “improving efficiencies – human, natural, resource and energy.”

The Future Farmstead Program at University of Georgia is dedicated to the future of food, energy and the environment. Designed to take advantage of its rural setting in Tifton, Ga., the home will serve as an education demonstration, research facility and residence for the project’s graduate students. The 3,000-square-foot, two-story home, designed by Simone duBois and Denise Donahue of Camdus Construction with the assistance of UGA Family and Consumer Sciences, is to be net-zero energy, economically and environmentally friendly with high expectations to be platinum LEED certified. The home is expected to receive approximately 15,000 visitors per year, including K-12 groups, builders interested in learning about green building, and the general public. In addition to the house itself, the site includes a pond, land for an edible garden, an energy producing playground, and a greenhouse.

The Future Farmstead project demonstrates how materials are applied in green building, provides a way for guests to be hands-on with materials in application and increases awareness about sustainable living. Contributing to this experience and the overall performance of the house are the Slicker® rainscreen from Benjamin Obdyke, one of America’s leading providers of high-quality roof and wall building solutions.

“The products we’ve specified are at the forefront of technology and if put together correctly, can extend the structure’s lifetime to hundreds of years,” said Tony Grahame, Green Building Technologies Professor at Moultrie Technical College. “I often see great materials put together incorrectly, and this home allows us to teach students how to avoid that.”

“So much is going into this house and most of it is pretty new technology,” said Dr. Craig Kvien, project leader and Crop and Soil Sciences Professor at UGA, “It’s important that everything works together really well, and to accomplish this we’ve been careful to select high quality products.”

The home was built tight, with plenty of insulation and solar panels. The team plans to keep the home updated as upgraded materials and technology become available over its long expected lifetime.

“Through our work on the project we have an opportunity to teach students about selecting compatible materials that can deliver the best results,” explained Grahame. “That’s why we selected the Slicker Classic rainscreen from Benjamin Obdyke.”

Slicker proved to be ideal for the application as it is perfectly compatible to create a gap between the pre-weatherized sheathing and the fiber cement cladding used on the exterior of the house.

Benjamin Obdyke's Slicker rainscreen effectively extends the lives of both commercial and residential buildings, using the technology to effectively act as a means for moisture management. By creating an air space between the back of the cladding and the face of the water resistance barrier, the rainscreen is able to reduce the forces that draw water into the assembly. The air space that it provides drains any water that gets through the cladding. The rainscreen system also accelerates the drying of moist air that accumulates in the interior wall assembly by moving air throughout the cavity. The performance benefits of Slicker rainscreen are essential to the longevity of Future Farmstead home and the success of the project.

The Future Farmstead home is in its final stages of completion and will soon become a model home for building smarter homes. The team hopes the home will show visitors how technology and quality products can be built into a home to make it energy efficient and easily manageable. "It's important to understand the big picture," said Grahame. "It's amazing how many houses are built that look great but are really useless."

Project Participants:

University of Georgia
Moultrie Technical College
Camdus Construction
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Labor

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