

2021

# PROGRESS

REPORT



Farmers for  
Sustainable  
Food



UNITE.  
INSPIRE.  
EMPOWER.



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**Todd Doornink**  
*President*

Jon-De Farm

Western Wisconsin  
Conservation Council



*We always have  
the goal of being  
good neighbors and  
stewards of the land  
and water in our  
care. It's a shared  
commitment that's  
evident.*



As a fourth-generation dairy farmer, caring for the natural resources is an inherent part of what my family and I do each day.

It is a true honor to lead Farmers for Sustainable Food in connecting farmers with the rest of the supply chain and our local communities to share ideas and collaborate for mutual success.

What started as an idea from a group of forward-thinking farmers, industry leaders and environmental organizations has grown to support multiple farmer-led watershed conservation groups and several sustainability projects across the Midwest.

I also serve as the president of my local farmer-led group, the Western Wisconsin Conservation Council. Our aim is to bring benefit to the whole community while preserving family farming as a way of life. Having FSF support our local group keeps us connected throughout the state and provides opportunities at a much larger scale.

Farmers are committed to being good neighbors and stewards of the land and water in our care. It's a shared commitment that's evident. The incredible part of FSF is that it highlights the farmer's voice, bringing realistic and innovative ideas to the table, creating environmentally and economically sustainable farms supporting their communities. I am excited to watch this organization continue to grow and make impactful, positive change.

*Todd Doornink*



## Our **Mission**

Empower farmers to develop and implement practical, innovative solutions collaboratively for environmental, economic and social good.



## Our **Vision**

A sustainable food system in which farmers, their communities and the environment thrive.

# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



**1**

brand refresh



**14**

new members



**1**

National award



**\$255k+**

raised



*Our work is not slowing down. More partnerships, projects and farmer-led groups are in the works. Connecting our farmers, food processors, brands, retailers and customers is critical in agriculture's sustainability journey.*

I am excited and a little bit in awe as I write this, reflecting on the incredible progress we have made since I started as managing director of Farmers for Sustainable Food in 2019.

First, I want to thank the farmers and the farmer-led conservation groups that we have the privilege to work with. Your belief in our team and willingness to support us was our foundation. Second, I offer thanks to our board members who dedicate their time and talent to lead FSF. Finally, thank you to all of our members. We have grown quickly in a short period of time, and we have only just begun.

2021 was full of progress for our organization. We launched the new brand, Farmers for Sustainable Food, in May. We developed our Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects, wrapped up year one of our pilot sustainability project, announced year one results, won a national award for the project and brought more farmers into the fold. Additionally, we started three more sustainability projects with various partners. Our team and partnerships continue to grow, helping us provide support for farmer-led groups and manage projects.

Our work is not slowing down. More partnerships, projects and farmer-led groups are in the works. Connecting our farmers, food processors, brands, retailers and customers is critical in agriculture's sustainability journey. Every day, our team's top priority remains finding ways to best support farmers in their conservation goals and help them succeed.

*Lauren Brey*



**Lauren Brey**  
Managing Director



*The farmers we are proud to work with continue to take on new challenges by accelerating the adoption of practices that lead to continuous improvement in conservation.*

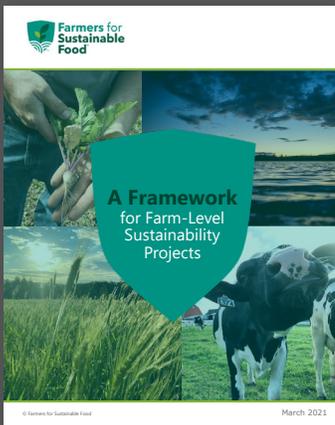
**Tim Trotter**  
CEO, Farmers for Sustainable Food



# RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

## FRAMEWORK

Launched a first-of-its-kind framework for sustainability projects. It helps farmers determine what conservation practices are most effective for their individual farms, and document the environmental and financial effects. The framework is being applied across the Midwest.



## YEAR 1 SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT RESULTS

In the first year of the project, participating farms demonstrated that their conservation practices contribute to significant reductions in environmental pollutants reaching streams and rivers.

On average, farms participating have adopted five conservation practices per field that Field to Market's Fieldprint Platform™ recognizes as having a positive impact on sustainability scores.

Reports detailing the findings are on the FSF website.

## OUTSTANDING SUPPLY CHAIN COLLABORATION AWARD

A group of Wisconsin farmers and partners in the dairy food supply chain earned national praise for creating a framework for conservation projects that protect soil and water quality, keep farms financially viable and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability to communities, customers and regulators.

The framework and its use in a pilot sustainability project were recognized by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. The recipients — Farmers for Sustainable Food, Grande Cheese Company and Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance (LASA) — drove development of the project, and other key stakeholders are contributing to the initiative.

## DAIRY GENETICS AND SUSTAINABILITY



Dairy farmers are great stewards of the land and the environment around them. What has always been the challenge is the lack of correlation for everyday practices to the reduction of resources needed to achieve high profitability.

In a collaboration between Farmers for Sustainable Food and Zoetis, a multi-site evaluation is occurring to demonstrate how focusing on genetic improvement through the utilization of CLARIFIDE® Plus, the Zoetis genomic evaluation for predicting lifetime profitability and wellness, correlates to not only improving profit on farms but reductions in enteric methane emissions, antibiotic usage and feed needed for maintenance purposes.



A final analysis and report will be shared at the Dairy Strong conference in Madison, Wis., in January 2023.



## spotlight FARMER MEDIA TRAINING

News media provides an opportunity for spreading the word about the commitment farmers have to environmentally sound farming practices.

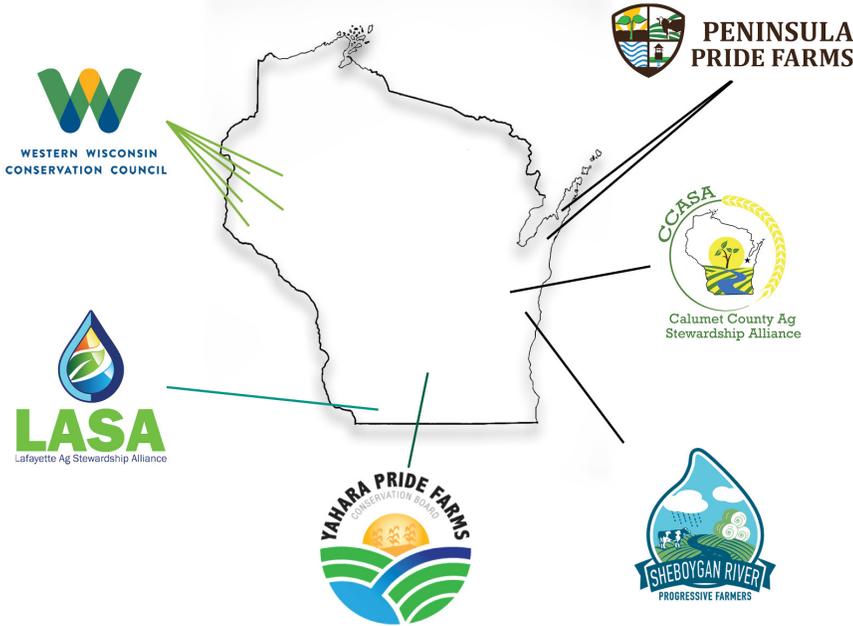
So, it is important that members of our farmer-led watershed conservation groups have the ability and confidence to participate in news interviews.

FSF stepped in to help by holding a media training where the farmers learned best practices for interacting with reporters and how to prepare for interviews, and then practiced.

### Special thanks to



Compeer Financial's Fund for Rural America awarded FSF a General Use Grant of \$5,000 that made this training possible.



## FARMER-LED GROUP SUPPORT

Farmers for Sustainable Food continues to help grow a network of farmer-led watershed conservation groups. In 2021, FSF closely supported six of them in Wisconsin. These groups are expanding innovative farming practices that are proving, through science and data, to be reducing the risk to the environment.

The FSF team supports groups with administration, event planning and execution, communications and marketing, fundraising support, strategy, technical support and project development and management, as well as growing partnerships to help achieve the groups' goals.

*The best part of the group so far is the media training. I was taught how to interact with members of the media to share facts about the work we're doing and express how we are improving the land and finding new ways to do things.*

**Bob Danes**

Farmer from Calumet County  
Ag Stewardship Alliance



# SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS EXPAND

After seeing the success of the pilot sustainability project in southwestern Wisconsin with LASA and other partners, other organizations reached out to FSF for support in launching their own projects.

FSF's framework serves as a guide to help groups document and communicate the sustainability of farming practices to other farmers, local communities, the agricultural supply chain and regulatory agencies. Each project has its own approach for documenting practices and outcomes based on unique goals.

## PPF

11 members of Peninsula Pride Farms are working to better understand the impact of conservation practices on their cropland, as well as local watersheds.

## LASA

15 farmers from the Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance track and set benchmarks to measure environmental and financial impacts of conservation practices.

## Valley Queen Cheese

Dairy farmers that supply Valley Queen Cheese and crop farmers that supply feed to those dairies are documenting both field-level and dairy barn data for a "whole-farm" picture of sustainability.

## Crave Brothers Farm

An individual farm started a project to document on-farm sustainability and impact on local water resources from conservation practices used on the farm.



# 2021 SURVEY RESULTS

Five of the farmer-led groups FSF supports complete a member conservation practice survey each year to help track the impact the groups have on water quality, soil health and climate. In 2021, these groups encompassed 231 farmers, 288,925 acres and 243,720 head of livestock.

The survey captures practices farmers are implementing such as soil sampling, nutrient management, cover crop acres, reduced tillage, no-tillage, low disturbance manure injection, planting green, grassed waterways and buffer strips. These are analyzed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), giving an overall impact of how the practices are potentially improving the environment.

*Reductions are estimated using models. Actual reductions may be higher or lower. For more information on these figures, contact Dana Christel, conservation specialist; dana.christel@wi.gov.*



## Climate

Reduced CO2 equivalents (greenhouse gas emissions) by **49,830 tons**. This equals the greenhouse gas emissions from 10,737 cars driven for a year.



## Soil health

Reduced sediment from leaving farm fields by **106,846 tons**. One dump truck can carry about 10 tons of soil.



## Water quality

Reduced **330,471 pounds** of phosphorus from leaving farm fields. One pound of P that reaches a waterbody can feed 500 pounds of algae.

# AS SEEN IN THE MEDIA

# 258

## MEDIA HITS

FSF has been in front of a potential audience of 16 million viewers/readers.

 **87,065**

IMPRESSIONS

 **7,618**

ENGAGEMENTS

 **440**

FOLLOWERS

 **311**

POSTS  
PUBLISHED



## Farmers for Sustainable Food

## NEW BRAND

Much has changed for FSF since the group was formed in 2016 as the Dairy Strong Sustainability Alliance. The focus is broader, the projects more innovative and the set of partners more diverse.

In 2021, the board decided that a new name and branding would reflect this evolution. The organization became Farmers for Sustainable Food, complete with new vision and mission statements, sharper messaging and a logo and other design elements that create a more engaging and inclusive look and feel.

## CONNECT WITH US



FarmersForSustainableFood.com

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 MEMBERS

Because of your commitment, we can maintain our work supporting farmer-led initiatives and their work in finding solutions to today's environmental challenges.

## GENERAL MEMBERS

Agropur  
Compeer Financial  
Dairy Business Association  
Dairy Farmers of America  
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin  
DVO, Inc.  
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative  
GLC Minerals  
Grande Cheese Company  
GreenStone Farm Credit Services  
Houston Engineering, Inc.

Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy  
Insight FS  
Midwest Dairy  
REV LNG LLC  
Riesterer & Schnell  
Schreiber Foods, Inc.  
The Nature Conservancy  
Tilth Agronomy  
Valley Queen Cheese  
Wisconsin Biomass Energy Coalition  
Zoetis

## FARMER MEMBERS

Brey Cycle Farm  
Cottonwood Dairy  
Crave Brothers Farm  
Dairy Dreams  
Darlington Ridge Farms  
Deer Run Dairy

Double Dutch Dairy  
Dutch Dairy  
Jon-De Farm  
Kinnard Farms  
Pagel's Ponderosa Dairy  
Rosy-Lane Holsteins

## special thanks TO OUR FARMER-LED GROUPS



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

By joining Farmers for Sustainable Food, you help us grow our resources to make meaningful change. By being on the forefront of change, you will help create a future that benefits the food system and our communities and ensures long-term prosperity.

To join us and help us meet our goals, reach out to [info@farmersforsustainablefood.com](mailto:info@farmersforsustainablefood.com).



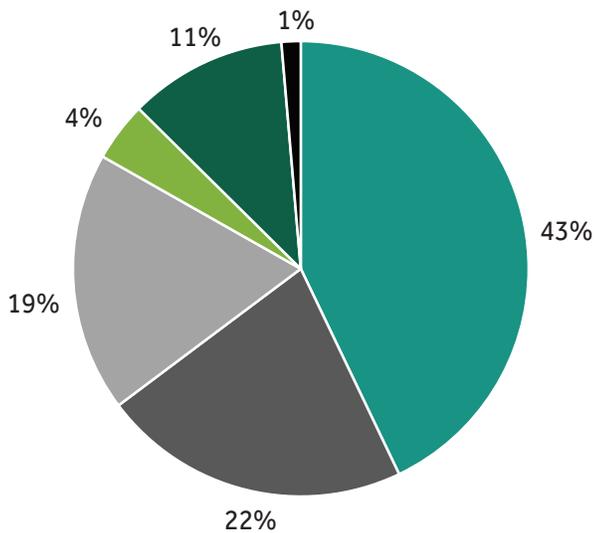
*Our collective effort and outcomes have grown tremendously in a short period, and we are poised for even greater accomplishments in the coming year. It wouldn't be possible without the belief of our members and the farmers doing the hard work.*

**Lauren Brey**  
Managing Director

## a quick look at FINANCIALS

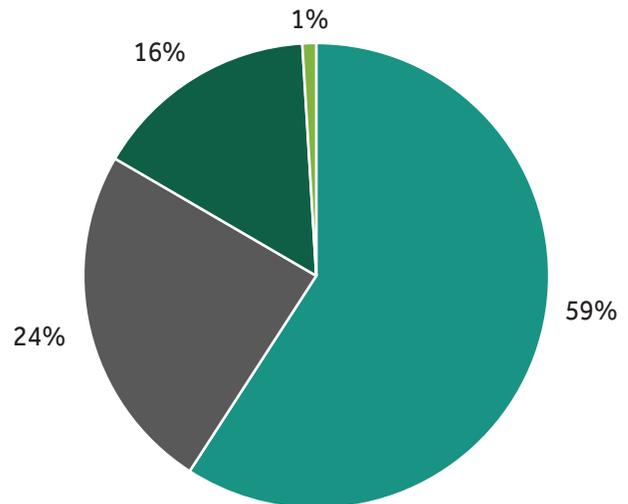
In 2021, FSF saw increased revenue compared to budget, and along with that came increased expenses compared to budget. Total revenue for 2021 was \$255,658.87. Total expenses were \$267,283.69. FSF exceeded the budget expectations by \$8.3K.

**2021  
Expense by category**



- Project
- Professional fees
- Rebrand and marketing
- Operating
- Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative MOU
- Miscellaneous

**2021  
Revenue by category**



- Project
- Membership
- Farmer-led group MOUs
- Miscellaneous



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## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Todd Doornink**

*President*

Jon-De Farm  
Western Wis. Conservation Council



**Paul Cornette**

Cornette Dairy  
Peninsula Pride Farms



**Colleen Geurts**

Schreiber Foods, Inc.



**Wes Garner**

*Secretary*

GLC Minerals



**Greg Steele**

Compeer Financial



**Mike Berget**

Berget Family Farms  
Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance



**Lee Kinnard**

*Treasurer*

Kinnard Farms



**Lynn Thornton**

Grande Cheese Company

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## MEET THE FSF TEAM

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**Tim Trotter**

*CEO*

Tim leads FSF, Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative and the Dairy Business Association. Under his strategic management, FSF continues to grow partnerships throughout the industry. Originally from Illinois, he grew up on a dairy and crop farm. He farmed for 20 years in Illinois where he and his wife, Rosella, raised three daughters. During his career, Tim has led national agriculture and strategy organizations. Tim and Rosella now live in Sturgeon Bay, Wis.



**Lauren Brey**

*Managing Director*

Lauren leads FSF's support of the farmer-led groups as well as the development and management of sustainability projects. She provides project oversight, develops partnerships, manages budgets and more. Lauren and her family have a dairy farm and direct-to-consumer beef business in Door County, Wis., and are participants in their local farmer-led group.



**Jamie Fisher**

*Project Manager*

Jamie coordinates all administrative services provided to the farmer-led groups that are part of FSF. She leads day-to-day support, including membership services, cost-share management, event planning and more. A former dairy farmer, Jamie has a keen understanding of farming and is passionate about supporting farmers in their improvement journeys.



**Anne Moore**

*Sustainability Communications Manager*

Anne manages all communication efforts for FSF and the farmer-led groups. She carefully crafts messages for FSF and the groups to use in media relations, advertising, social media, member communications and at events. With experience in the farmer cooperative environment for nine years, she has true passion to serve and represent farmers and convey the sustainability journey happening on our farms today.

