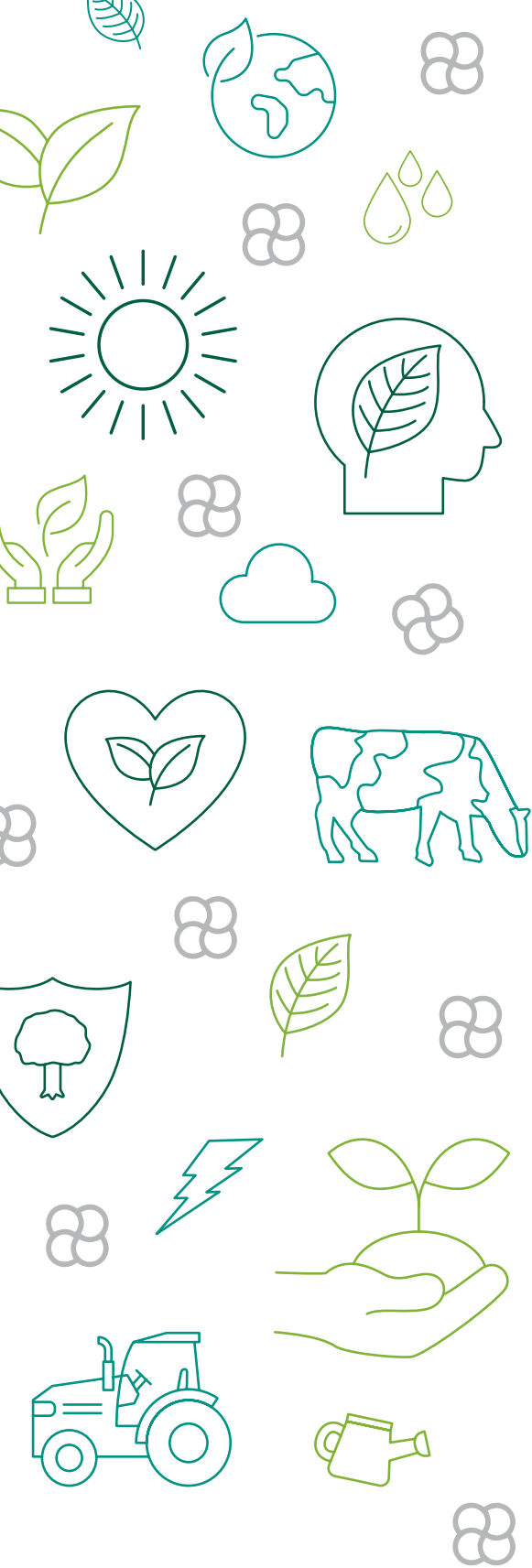




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PROGRESS

report

2024

UNITE.
INSPIRE.
EMPOWER.



**Farmers for
Sustainable
Food**



TM

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Paul Cornette
President
Cornette Dairy
Peninsula Pride Farms

“

***We will continue
to innovate and
empower farmers.***

A better story to tell.

Not long after joining Farmers for Sustainable Food, I was asked why a farmer should consider joining the group. After talking a bit about our mission and goals, I commented that FSF was doing more than helping farmers tell their stories; it was giving farmers a better story to tell. That was years ago, but it has never been truer than it is today. As this report shows, 2024 was another year of impressive growth. Our work continues to draw interest from new farmer-led groups and organizations from across the food and agricultural supply chain.

One year ago, the FSF Climate-Smart Program under the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities award was an exciting development waiting for implementation. Our team worked hard to unite our vision of farmer-led solutions for improved environmental outcomes with the USDA's vision for the concept of a Climate-Smart Commodity. The Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects, created years ago by FSF in collaboration with the farmer-led groups to collect data from farms and measure the impact of implementing more environmentally friendly practices, was a fantastic fit. The data proves that conservation practices are working, and it also gave a voice to farmers who want to define what sustainability means and show those in the supply chain that farmers are part of environmental solutions. The sustainability metrics and carbon intensity scoring that our team and members derive from our farms is drawing the attention of processors and consumer-packaged goods companies (CPGs) throughout the supply chain. I'm incredibly proud to say I think farmers participating in the FSF Climate-Smart Program are very close to being able to generate new revenue streams based on our sustainability practices.

This didn't happen overnight. We owe our appreciation to the fantastic team that spent years developing a vision and executing hard work to bring us to this point. We also thank all our members, from supply chain partners to individual farms to the many farms that FSF reaches through partnerships with farmer-led groups. Without all of us working together, we would not be as close to reaching our goal of creating value from sustainability. As I write this, the political winds are changing direction in Washington, D.C.

There is some uncertainty about the future of the USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Program. We hope the work done in this program will be recognized and that the commitments made to farmers and partners in our project will be honored. I remain confident our work will result in value for all those who have or will participate. The program was designed to draw on the value of conservation from the marketplace, not the government, and we are already making progress in this area because of the work participants are doing on their farms.

As I look ahead, there is still much to be excited about. We will continue to reach new farmers, new partners and new investments in conservation. We will continue to innovate and empower farmers.

Paul Cornette



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.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



394,000

acres of land



8

new members



400

farmers in **ten**
farmer-led groups
supported by FSF



450,000

head of livestock



Our team remains dedicated to progressing and achieving new goals. Together, with the strength of our partners and supporters, we can tackle challenges head-on and create a more sustainable future for all.

Hello friends and supporters,

2024 has been another remarkable year filled with growth, continuous improvement and exciting opportunities for Farmers for Sustainable Food. It's rewarding to see our work empowering farmers and supporting farmer-led watershed conservation groups continue to have a ripple effect, extending beyond our initial expectations. I am excited about our potential to continue supporting farmers in advancing sustainable farming practices and increasing our impact over the next year.

Our growth and accomplishments over the past year would not be possible without our generous supporters, partners and collaborators who truly believe in our mission to build a sustainable future for all.

Key milestones in 2024:

- **Expanding the FSF Climate-Smart Program:** Building on our Framework for Farm-Level Sustainability Projects, we continue to expand our USDA Climate-Smart Commodities Program in partnership with Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative. Our program grew to include 12 projects in 2024 with over a hundred farmers enrolled in the program.
- **Strengthening our farmer-led group support:** We continue to support the growth of our community of farmer-led watershed conservation groups by fostering connections, sharing knowledge, and driving positive impact. In 2024, we expanded our support to include Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative. This recently established group based in Manitowoc County, Wis., has the potential to make significant impacts on the local environment and community.
- **Growing our collaborative community:** Our organization continues to foster new connections and strengthen existing partnerships to provide the best possible support for our farmers. By collaborating with farmers, processors, scientists, agriculture professionals and others, we foster the sharing of ideas and consider the sustainability of the whole food system.

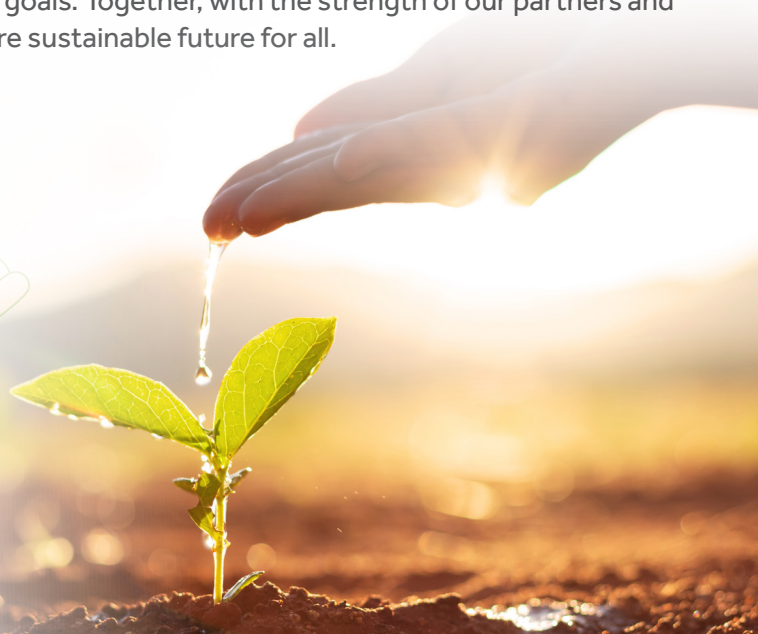
Our team remains dedicated to progressing and achieving new goals. Together, with the strength of our partners and supporters, we can tackle challenges head-on and create a more sustainable future for all.

With sincere appreciation,

Lauren Brey



Lauren Brey
Managing Director



SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FARMING ACROSS THE UPPER MIDWEST

Farmers for Sustainable Food supports farmers who are leading the way in sustainable farming practices, which benefits farms and their local communities. FSF empowers farmers with access to tools and resources as well as a network of other supportive farmers and partners. Through multi-year collaborative projects, FSF helps foster data-driven decision-making, encouraging farmers to make informed decisions on conservation and to track progress over time. With farmers leading the way, FSF is creating long-term solutions to today's environmental challenges that collectively focus on environmental, economic and social good.

FSF brings together farmers, processors, environmental groups, scientists, food companies, community leaders and agricultural businesses, to share ideas that reflect the changing world around us and consider the future of our food system as a whole.

Farmers for Sustainable Food is dedicated to creating a future where our land and resources are protected, communities benefit and farms thrive. Every dollar you give fuels projects that empower farmers to understand their data and build practical, sustainable solutions with lasting positive impact. Together, we're connecting farms with the entire food chain to make a difference.

Join Us in Building a Brighter Future for All

Building a sustainable future is a big task, and we can't do it alone. Join us in building a brighter future for generations to come. Your support drives our mission to empower farmers on their sustainability journeys, creating a prosperous future for all. Your donation is an investment in a more sustainable future. Together, we can continue to promote sustainable farming practices where environmental, economic and social good are at the forefront.

Please note: FSF is a 501(c)(3) and donations to it may be tax deductible as allowed by law.

Scan the QR code for more information or to donate today!



2024 DONORS

Anonymous

General Mills

Holly Bellmund

Kerri Olson

Lloyd and Daphne Holterman

Lakeshore Natural
Resources Partnership
through an award to Peninsula Pride Farms

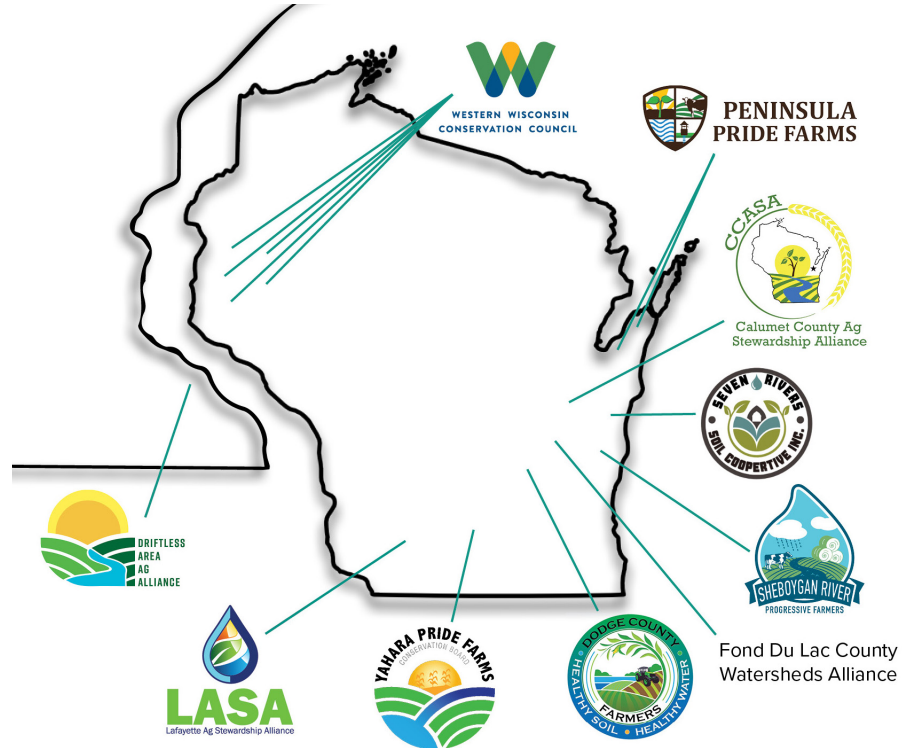
Mary Lou Egan and
Marc Bendick Jr

Steve Richter

FARMER-LED GROUP SUPPORT

Farmers for Sustainable Food supports a growing network of farmer-led watershed conservation groups. In 2024, FSF partnered with nine groups in Wisconsin and one in Minnesota. These groups are using science and data to validate the role expanding innovative farming practices are playing in reducing environmental impacts.

FSF provides customized services to each group based on their needs and goals, which can include administration, event planning and execution, communications and marketing support, project management, technical assistance and more. Additionally, FSF supports an annual conservation practice survey that captures farmers' conservation efforts, demonstrating continuous improvement and environmental benefits.



COMMUNITY

Each group hosts events throughout the year, including field days, farm tours, workshops and an annual meeting or conference. These opportunities allow farmers to learn from each other and their neighbors and provide the chance for the public to engage and learn during the event.

MEDIA

News media amplifies the message farmers are sharing about their commitment to environmentally sound farming practices. Through press releases and media interviews, the ten groups were featured in 450 stories, potentially reaching over 193 million people.

41
EVENTS

314
FARMER
MEMBERS

450
MEDIA
HITS



2024 SURVEY RESULTS

Farmers in the Upper Midwest are advancing their sustainable farming efforts, as highlighted in the latest annual conservation survey supported by Farmers for Sustainable Food. The survey results showcase the conservation practices utilized by farmers across Wisconsin and Minnesota, revealing ongoing progress and positive environmental impacts.

This is the seventh consecutive year of documenting conservation practices with farmer-led groups, showing the farmers' dedication to continuous improvement and bettering soil and water quality.

In 2024, 257 farmers from seven different farmer-led groups supported by Farmers for Sustainable Food participated in the annual survey, encompassing 278,329 acres and 378,313 head of livestock.

Reductions are estimated using models. Actual reductions may be higher or lower. For more information about the farmer-led watershed conservation groups supported by FSF, visit farmersforsustainablefood.com.



Climate

Reduced CO2 equivalents (greenhouse gas emissions) by **30,839 metric tons**. This equals the greenhouse gas emissions from **7,342 cars driven for a year**.



Soil health

Farm fields have reduced sediment loss by **368,948 tons**, equivalent to **36,894 dump trucks'** worth of soil.



Water quality

Phosphorus runoff was reduced by **518,898 pounds** of phosphorus, potentially preventing **259.5 million pounds** of algae growth in local water bodies.

NEW FARMER-LED WATERSHED GROUP IN MANITOWOC, WIS.

Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative



Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative is the latest farmer-led watershed conservation group to work with Farmers for Sustainable Food. This non-profit organization is led by farmers working together to protect water quality and enhance soil health in Manitowoc County, Wis. It was established in 2024 when a group of farmers joined together with a vision to improve and promote sustainable farming practices in their local community. The cooperative's mission is to protect the water that drains into Lake Michigan and other bodies of water. The group continues to grow and expand their impact by hosting educational events, workshops and other activities.

Learn more and/or join their efforts by following the group on Facebook.



WISCONSIN FARMER-LED GROUPS SHARE KEY FINDINGS FROM DATA-DRIVEN PROJECTS

Data spans four and five years, providing significant insights.

Farmers in Wisconsin are using data to better understand on-farm sustainability and the environmental impact of farming practices. These efforts are part of multi-year sustainability projects led by Farmers for Sustainable Food. The organization supports multiple farmer-led groups, two of which have participated in the projects, using sustainability metrics to inform their farm management decisions.

The release of the Peninsula Pride Farms Sustainability Project year four results and the Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance Sustainability Project year five results demonstrate continuous improvement in sustainability and water quality across Wisconsin.

"These projects bring value to our members and partners. Farmers use quality data to measure improvements made from adopting sustainable farming practices and where they can get the most benefit from their investments," FSF President and co-owner of Cornette Dairy, Paul Cornette, said. "They also help processors and retailers connect with progressive-minded growers who want consumers to know how their food is produced and that it's produced sustainably."

Eleven farms managing over 34,000 acres and 40,000 head of dairy cattle participated in the PPF Sustainability Project. The project will be completed in 2025, with five years of data collection and analysis.

The LASA Sustainability Project, in its fifth and final year, involved 15 farms managing over 40,000 acres. This significant milestone demonstrates the group's unwavering commitment to sustainability.

Both projects showed consistent, positive progress for several metrics, especially regarding water quality.

Key findings from the PPF Sustainability Project year four results include:

Conservation practices: On average, farms use two or more conservation practices in each of their analyzed fields. The most used sustainable farming practices within the group include reduced tillage, cover crops, no-till and grassed waterways.

Water quality: Of the reported acreage, 91% has mitigated the risk of excessive nitrogen loss to the subsurface.

Soil erosion: The average rate of soil erosion for corn grain over the four-year project period was 0.97 tons per acre per year, significantly lower than the state benchmark of 3.5 tons per acre per year for corn grain.

Energy use: The group's energy use, 209,632 btu per ton for corn silage, measured 33% better than the national indicator.

Key findings from five years of the LASA Sustainability Project include:

Conservation practices: On average, farms use two or more conservation practices in each of their analyzed fields. The most used sustainable farming practices within the group include grassed waterways, contouring, cover crops, reduced tillage, strip-cropping and no-till.

Water quality: Of the reported acreage, 83% has mitigated the risk of excessive nitrogen loss to the subsurface water.

Soil erosion: The average rate of soil erosion for corn grain over the five-year project period was 1.7 tons per acre per year, significantly lower than the state benchmark of 3.5 tons per acre per year for corn grain.

Energy use: The group's energy use, 145,575 btu per ton for corn silage, measured 53% better than the national indicator.

74,000
ACRES
COMBINED

26
TOTAL
FARMS

Data is based on analysis by Houston Engineering Inc. using Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture's Fieldprint Platform®.

"The passion and drive these farmers have to continuously improve is evident through their consistent efforts year after year and LASA's completion of their project," Lauren Brey, Farmers for Sustainable Food Managing Director, said. "Neither group is stopping here. They continue to expand on these findings through their new projects within the FSF Climate-Smart Program."

Expanding on findings from the sustainability projects, the FSF Climate-Smart Program gathers more data and information to help showcase a more holistic understanding of each farm's sustainability progress, and, if the farmer chooses, this program also helps facilitate conversations about sustainability throughout the supply chain, including connections between farmers and processors.

Learn more about Farmers for Sustainable Food and the farmers and projects it supports at FarmersforSustainableFood.com.



PENINSULA PRIDE FARMS PROJECT RECOGNIZED WITH NATIONAL AWARD



Farmers for Sustainable Food, Houston Engineering, Inc. and Peninsula Pride Farms were honored as Field to Market's 2024 Collaboration of the Year for their work on the Peninsula Pride Farms Sustainability Project. Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture® is a diverse group of grower organizations; agribusinesses; food, feed, beverage, restaurant and retail companies; conservation groups; universities and public sector partners that focus on defining, measuring and advancing the sustainability of food; feed, fiber and fuel production. This award recognizes outstanding collaboration and cross-sector partnership in advancing continuous improvement of sustainability at the field and landscape levels.

The PPF Sustainability Project, in its fourth year, involved 11 farms managing over 34,000 acres and 40,000 head of dairy cattle in Door and Kewaunee Counties, Wis. The project will be completed next year with five years of data collection and analysis.

The farmers involved in this project use sustainability metrics to inform their farm management decisions. They have demonstrated continuous improvement in sustainability and water quality. Key findings from the PPF Sustainability Project year four results can be found on page 7 of this report.

Data is based on analysis by Houston Engineering Inc. using Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture's Fieldprint Platform®.

"Collaborating with Houston Engineering to support members of Peninsula Pride in driving positive change is making a great impact, and the data continues to prove that," Lauren Brey, Farmers for Sustainable Food managing director, said. "We're honored to receive this award and incredibly proud of the farmers who are committed to measuring conservation progress and making improvements."

In addition to PPF's project, two other award recipients were honored by Field to Market.

Learn more about Field to Market and the 2024 Sustainability Leadership Awards at www.fieldtomarket.org/awards.





"Having the ability to see the impact my farming practices are making on a yearly basis helps me make better decisions," Paul Cornette, dairy farmer and FSF board president, said. "Through the FSF Climate-Smart program, I have been able to track my individual metrics as well as compare them to the group to see where I can improve or may be ahead of the curve."

Due to the increasing interest in the program, enrollment for the second year is full. However, farmers can enroll now to be included in the third year of the program.

"We are very encouraged with the number of farmers interested in participating in our program," Brey says. "This level of engagement illustrates the desire farmers have to not only incorporate conservation practices, but more importantly to have metrics about the impact of those practices to inform future cropping decisions. We are fortunate to work with such progressive and engaged farmers. We anticipate continuing to see favorable results through the duration of this program."

For more information about the FSF Climate-Smart Program, visit farmersforsustainablefood.com.



Pictured L-R: Josh Goeser, Kevin Krentz, Heidi Fischer, Paul Cornette, Jacob Brey, Duane Ducat and Jake Peissig

Introducing FSF's Climate-Smart Ambassadors

This past year FSF launched a new initiative to help empower farmers to tell their story to neighbors, stakeholders and the media. The first cohort of Climate-Smart ambassadors met in November for media training. During the day-long training the farmers worked on messaging skills, interview techniques and tackling tough questions. Through storytelling and outreach, these ambassadors are highlighting their personal journeys and the collective impact of the FSF Climate-Smart Program in creating a more sustainable future for farming.

Jacob Brey
Brey Cycle Farm

Paul Cornette
Cornette Dairy

Michael Crinion
Ash Grove Dairy

Duane Ducat
Deer Run Dairy

Heidi Fischer
Fischer-Clark Dairy

Josh Goeser
Goeser Dairy

Kevin Krentz
Sheadview Dairy

Joan Maxwell
Cinnamon Ridge Dairy Farm

Jake Peissig
JTP Farms

MEMBER PROFILE



Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin is a non-profit organization funded entirely by Wisconsin's dairy farmers. Founded in 1983, DFW's mission is to develop markets for Wisconsin's dairy products and support the state's dairy industry. DFW is committed to promoting the economic, environmental and social sustainability of Wisconsin's dairy farms and ensuring the continued success of the dairy industry in the state.

What motivated you to become a member of FSF?

As the marketing and promotion organization for Wisconsin dairy farmers, working with industry partners that help provide resources and information to farmers is very important. Each farm has its own

story to tell, and partners like FSF focus on empowering farmers with information and resources so the farmers can lead on their sustainability and climate-smart decisions.

What value does FSF bring to your organization?

The value we get from our membership includes working closely and learning first-hand about the sustainability progress being made on farms. We are also able to make connections with members who can share their sustainability stories through our media contacts and videos, which is important as we continue to drive awareness of the continued sustainability work being done by Wisconsin farmers on Wisconsin dairy farms.

How does FSF differ from other organizations you might work with?

FSF's mission is to empower farmers to develop and implement practical, innovative solutions collaboratively for environmental, economic and social good. The focus on supporting farmers and helping them find outcomes unique to their farms is a great collaborative partnership.

Why would you encourage others to join FSF?

FSF is an organization that provides resources and partnerships to assist farmers on their own sustainability journeys. Our membership helps farmers continue to develop and implement sustainability practices.



THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

GENERAL MEMBERS

AGI Suretrack
Agropur
AgroVive Biologicals LLC*
AgSource
Arm & Hammer Animal and Food Production
Arva Intelligence
BMO Bank, N.A.
C.O.nxt
Cargill
Clean Wisconsin
Compeer Financial
Dairy Business Association
Dairy Farmers of America
Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
General Mills
GLC Minerals
Grande Cheese Company

Grassland Dairy Products, Inc.*
GreenStone Farm Credit Services
Houston Engineering, Inc.
Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy
Kanati Land Management*
Midwest Dairy
Minnesota Milk Producers Association*
Nicolet National Bank*
Pivot Bio
Riesterer & Schnell
Schreiber Foods, Inc.
Syngenta
The Nature Conservancy
Tilth Agronomy
Valley Queen Cheese
Wisconsin Biomass Energy Coalition
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
Zoetis

FARMER MEMBERS

Brey Cycle Farm
Cottonwood Dairy
Crave Brothers Farm
Creamery Creek Holsteins
Dairy Dreams
Darlington Ridge Farms
Deer Run Dairy
Double Dutch Dairy
Dutch Dairy

Heim's Hillcrest Dairy*
Jon-De Farm
Kinnard Farms
Larson Acres
Pagel's Ponderosa Dairy
Ripp's Dairy Valley*
Rosy-Lane Holsteins

**New members in 2024*

special thanks TO THE FARMER-LED GROUPS



Fond Du Lac County
Watersheds Alliance



PENINSULA
PRIDE FARMS





2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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President

Cornette Dairy
Peninsula Pride Farms



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Vice President

Berget Family Farms
Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance



Lee Kinnard

Treasurer

Kinnard Farms



Lynn Thornton

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Holly Bellmund

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Todd Doornink

Jon-De Farm
Western Wis. Conservation Council



Holly Jones

Agropur



Mark Loehr

Loehr Dairy
Sheboygan River Progressive
Farmers



Bryan Stanek

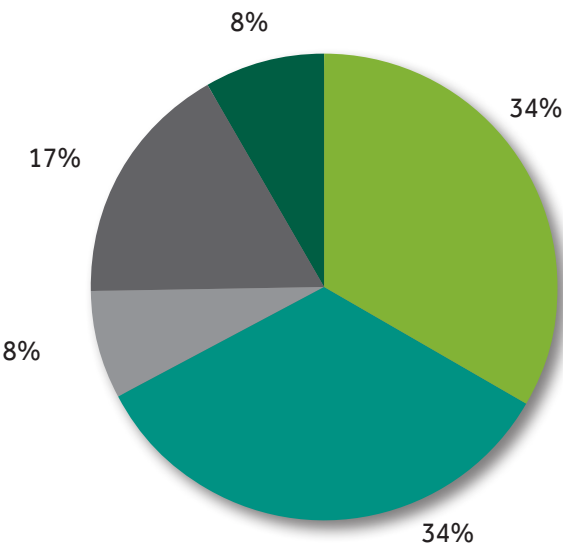
Compeer Financial



a quick look at
FINANCIALS

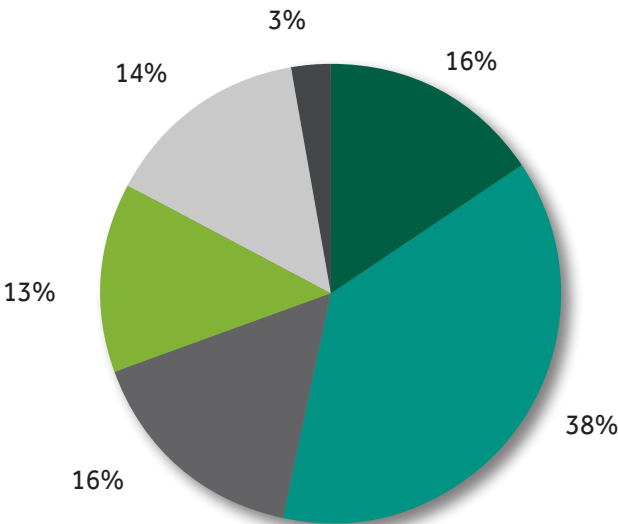
FSF performed better than budgeted. Total revenue for 2023 was \$511,041 and total expenses were \$398,793.

Expense by category



- Grant
- Professional fees
- Edge MOU
- Climate-Smart
- Operating

Revenue by category



- Project
- Grant
- Membership
- Farmer-led group MOUs
- Climate-Smart
- Miscellaneous

The numbers presented are from the 2023 audited financials.





Thank you to the staff of Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative for their continued support of FSF.





TM

**To learn more,
visit FarmersForSustainableFood.com**

