



**U.S. Dairy
Sustainability Awards**
Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy®

2016 Awards Recipients

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 **INNOVATION
CENTER FOR U.S. DAIRY.**
HEALTHY PEOPLE • HEALTHY PRODUCTS • HEALTHY PLANET

CHANGING THE EQUATION FOR GOOD BUSINESS

The fifth annual U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards recognize and honor outstanding dairy farms, businesses and partnerships for socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound practices. These practices, large and small, are steps that add up to promote the health and well-being of consumers, communities, cows, employees, the planet and business.

This year's recipients show how innovation and improvements sparked by one farm, one person or one organization can have a ripple effect that goes well beyond their farm gate or front door.

Winners are recognized in the following categories:

- Outstanding Dairy Farm Sustainability
- Outstanding Dairy Processing & Manufacturing Sustainability
- Outstanding Achievement in Resource Stewardship
- Outstanding Achievement in Community Partnerships

An independent panel of judges, which included leading experts on the economic and environmental issues and opportunities facing the dairy industry today, evaluated nominations on the following criteria:

- Program or project results as measured by triple-bottom-line success: economic, environmental and social
- Evidence of shared learning, innovation and improvement
- Potential for adoption by other dairy farms and businesses

The 2016 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards are part of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, an industrywide effort of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® to measure and improve the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the dairy industry. Launched in 2008 under the leadership of dairy farmers, the Sustainability Commitment has the support and participation of hundreds of organizations across the industry as well as support from academic, government and nongovernmental organizations.

OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Bateman's Mosida Farms

Elberta, Utah



Details drive sustainability for local dairy farm family

With a history of dairy farming in Utah that spans 150 years, the Bateman family has grown their farm to be the largest dairy in the state, with 7,000 milking cows. Along with their father, four Bateman brothers currently own, operate and manage Bateman's Mosida Farms. The brothers follow one of their father's most important lessons.

"We cannot stand idle. If we do, the industry will pass us by, and we'll be out of business," Lance Bateman said. This philosophy of continuous improvement has led the family toward updates that contribute to the operation's sustainability.

For example, the Batemans recently built a state-of-the-art, enclosed and temperature-controlled maternity barn that has improved the health of calves and mothers, reducing calf mortality to just half of the national average.

In addition, a dual manure management and sand reclamation system allows the dairy to reclaim beneficial nutrients for fertilizer, conserve water and reuse sand. Purchasing less sand means fewer trucks and reduced diesel use.

It doesn't stop there. Preparations for the future have begun as nine of the children in the next generation are considering the dairy farm lifestyle. A solar energy project is underway, more than half of their cropland is double-cropped, and they apply the latest research and technology to cow nutrition.

The Batemans feel that giving Utahns an inside look at what dairy farming entails is just as important as their improved facility and practices. The Batemans use farm tours to show that even at the biggest dairy in the state, focusing on details makes sustainable differences for the animals, their product and the environment.

"We take pride in this. It's our passion, our way of life, and we want our dairy to be the best that it can be," Brad Bateman said.

Utah's largest dairy employs several sustainable practices to get the most from its resources:

- Water on the dairy is used at least three times before going to the farm for irrigation.
- Work with Rocky Mountain Power has led to energy-efficient lighting and a solar panel project.
- A sand sidewalk and sand reuse has reduced the sand the farm has needed to buy, in turn reducing truck costs, fuel usage and environmental impact.

OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Jer-Lindy Farms LLC

Brooten, Minnesota



Creamery adds to farm's long legacy

Jerry and Linda Jennissen have a deep appreciation for their farm and are well-versed in its rich history. They can quickly name each owner from the time it was homesteaded in 1875 through 1983, when they bought the dairy. After purchasing the dairy, they named it Jer-Lindy Farms. Now that they have become stewards of that history, the Jennissens are working to keep Jer-Lindy Farms in the family and expand smartly to meet their needs and those of future generations.

The family's goal for the 200-cow operation is to be sustainable while profitable, and prove that such practices can be duplicated regardless of farm size. For example, the Jennissens use soil and crop testing to precisely manage pesticide and fertilizer use, and they created buffer strips to protect the Crow River that flows past their farm. In fact, Jer-Lindy Farms received the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification for their work to improve downstream water quality.

When the Jennissens' daughter, Alise Sjostrom, wanted to return to the farm with her husband, Lucas, the family collaborated to make her vision of starting a creamery a reality. In order to stay connected to Jer-Lindy Farms, Redhead Creamery uses milk directly from the farm and feeds the whey byproduct back to the cows. The creamery now includes a tasting room much like those found at small wineries, which provides valuable opportunities to engage with consumers. Farm tours offered on weekends build trust and understanding of dairy among the public.

Longevity and transparency are key to Jer-Lindy Farms' commitment to a robust sustainability program. Balancing profitability and responsibility is helping to ensure the Jennissens and Sjostroms will continue to be difference-makers well into the future.

The Jennissens are committed to finding many ways, big and small, to be sustainable while profitable:

- A move to high-efficiency energy systems resulted in 20 percent lower energy use.
- The soil sampling program for alfalfa fields reduced lime costs by 75 percent.
- By using manure, no commercial fertilizer is needed on their 258 acres of cropland.
- Shared learnings from a digester project help others in the industry succeed.

OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Siemers Holsteins

Newton, Wisconsin



Forage management benefits cow care, milk production and the environment

Dan Siemers describes his family as “cow people.” His grandfather and father took the best possible care of their cows at Siemers Holsteins in Newton, Wisconsin, and that principle has carried on through Dan’s generation. Siemers says he and his family are also “land people” who understand that they need to take care of the soil as well as they do their cows. Land is expensive and also the source of the feed needed to produce milk and keep cows healthy - a primary connection between farm and environment.

Siemers has taken forage management to a new level, demonstrating how focused, long-term solutions and data-driven approaches can really pay off. Siemers’ success starts on the field with an intensive soil-testing regimen that doubles the number of samples taken over typical practices. The 2.5-acre testing grid established by Siemers and his agronomist incorporates soil sample results, manure tests, and yield and cropping practices. It also allows for finer-scale management of the type and rate of nutrients applied to the fields. With this knowledge, they are able to pick just the right hybrid forages for the microenvironment of each grid and the right combination to optimize herd health.

Siemers likes to say, “If you don’t measure it, you can’t manage it.” And he has the numbers to demonstrate the return on investment from the operation’s responsible management practices.

The farm has recorded dramatically higher crop production, with a 30 percent increase in corn silage yield and a 10 percent improvement in alfalfa silage yield. Improved nutrition has increased the dairy herd’s milk production by 19 percent per cow. Plus, the farm’s sustainable practices have avoided 715 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

Siemers isn’t slowing down. He views each year as a new opportunity to try new technologies, and improve production and the overall health of his land and cows.

Siemers Holsteins has harnessed what it sees as the farm’s most valuable tool, its data, to carefully manage forage production and cow health, achieving impressive results:

- Nutrition program increased average milk yield by 19 percent
- Field management practices gave corn silage production a 30 percent boost
- Avoided 715 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions

OUTSTANDING DAIRY FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Homestead Dairy

Plymouth, Indiana



Dairy farm growth fueled by diverse sustainability efforts

From humble beginnings with nine cows in 1945 to a sweeping, modern dairy farm today, members of the Houin family have been dedicated stewards of their land and cows for seven decades.

Over the years, Homestead Dairy's herd has consistently expanded, leading to its current size of 2,400 cows. Bringing on four next-generation families is what encourages a spirit of continuous improvement among patriarch Floyd Houin, his wife, Deb, and family members Joel Gawronski, Brian Houin, Matt Houin and Ryan Rogers.

The farm's growth is fueled by a comprehensive set of sustainable practices, from resource conservation to community outreach showcasing the farm's dedication to environmental, social and economic sustainability. Homestead Dairy's outstanding animal care includes participation in Dairy Farmers of America's Gold Standard Program, which incorporates the animal care module of the National Milk Producers Federation's National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management Program (FARM). The dairy uses data from radio frequency identification (RFID) sensors to monitor herd health, and it recently transitioned to group housing for calves.

As part of their growth plan, the family set out to generate a new revenue stream by building a methane digester two years ago. On track for a five-year return on investment, the digester produces 800 kilowatts of energy each day, which is sold back to the power company for use in the electrical grid. The farm accepts food waste from several local manufacturers for the digester, helping other businesses decrease their carbon footprint.

The methane digester creates biosolids that are recycled into natural bedding, eliminating the farm's reliance on sand bedding, which once required deliveries of 15 dump truckloads of sand each week. Future plans for the digester include generating enough electricity for the farm to power itself without relying on the electrical grid.

Homestead Dairy focuses on diversity in sustainability solutions, using a wide variety of technologies and management techniques, including:

- Converting to 100 percent renewable bedding materials for cow barns
- Creating 800 kilowatts of energy per day from cow manure
- Minimizing truck traffic and diesel fuel needs with liquid manure fertilizer and a drag hose
- Increasing growth efficiencies of young calves by converting to automatic calf feeders
- Communicating the farm's dedication to sustainability by hosting farm tours and being an active member of the local community

OUTSTANDING DAIRY PROCESSING & MANUFACTURING SUSTAINABILITY

Agri-Mark and Cabot Creamery Cooperative Waitsfield, Vermont



Closed-loop approach delivers benefits across value chain, from cow to consumer

Last spring, Cabot Creamery Cooperative's butter boxes proudly proclaimed, "Cows in our cooperative provide cream AND electricity for the butter we churn." The boxes celebrate Real Farm Power,[™] the latest in a series of projects pioneered by Agri-Mark dairy cooperative and Cabot as part of a broader commitment each has made to sustainability.

Real Farm Power takes a closed-loop approach, recycling cow manure, food scraps and food processing byproducts to produce renewable energy. The program offers a blueprint for scaling anaerobic digester technology to smaller and medium-sized dairy farms.

"With a fluctuating dairy market, we needed a new approach to sustain our family and our farm," said David Barstow of Barstow's Longview Farm. A digester seemed like a promising solution, but on its own, the 450-head farm faced funding and feedstock challenges. The success of Real Farm Power lies in strategic partnerships between the farm, Cabot, Vanguard Renewables and Casella Organics, which coordinates the collection of feedstock from Geissler's Supermarket, along with 13 other food companies.

Estimates show the \$2.8 million project cost will be paid back in just six years.

Cabot has been on the sustainability journey since 1919, when 94 farmers invested \$5 per cow to purchase the village creamery. Today, Cabot is owned by Agri-Mark's 1,200 dairy-farm families throughout upstate New York and New England. Others in the Agri-Mark family who have been recognized nationally for their pioneering efforts include Blue Spruce Farm, Foster Brothers Farm and Freund's Farm.

Jed Davis, director of sustainability, reinforces Cabot's view that dairy can be a solution to societal problems like air pollution and food waste.

"On product packaging and through brand messaging, we are showing the public the creative ways that dairy can advance positive changes in our communities and our world," Davis said.

Real Farm Power reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 5,680 tons annually while:

- 2,200 MWh of renewable energy is generated, offsetting the power needed to make Cabot butter and saving the creamery \$38,000 annually.
- Thermal energy from hot water recaptures heat for the milk parlor and farmhouse, reducing Barstow's annual heating costs by over \$3,000 annually.
- 30,000 tons of nutrient-rich liquid from the digester fertilizes 400 acres of farmland.
- 46 tons of feedstock per day is diverted from community landfills.

OUTSTANDING DAIRY PROCESSING & MANUFACTURING SUSTAINABILITY

HONORABLE
MENTION

Foremost Farms USA and Schreiber Foods Inc. Richland Center, Wisconsin



Dairy companies partner to turn wastewater into energy

Foremost Farms USA and Schreiber Foods Inc. might, under certain circumstances, be considered competitors. Each produces dairy products at plants in Richland Center, Wisconsin. However, in late 2011, the two companies jointly began construction on Richland Center Renewable Energy (RCRE), a state-of-the-art water-treatment facility that generates renewable energy from the dairy plants' wastewater.

The facility, which can treat up to 1.4 million gallons of water per day, uses anaerobic digesters to break down organic material coming from the plants and produces biogas that is mostly methane. Using the biogas to fuel its generators, RCRE has the capacity to produce 1.7 megawatts of power, which can be sold back to the electric grid.

Prior to building RCRE, Foremost Farms and Schreiber Foods each was discharging its industrial wastewater to the municipal treatment plant. While this is common practice nationwide, the volume of waste brought the treatment plant to capacity and made plans to expand operations at Foremost Farms and Schreiber Foods more challenging. By creating a private plant, the two companies reduced stress on the municipal infrastructure. The collaboration also resulted in the elimination of waste-hauling truck traffic in the local community, as wastewater is now delivered directly to RCRE via an underground pipeline.

Community involvement was a priority for Foremost Farms and Schreiber Foods. RCRE has welcomed hundreds of people to tour the site, and went so far as to solicit feedback from adjacent property owners about exterior lighting and the color of the digester dome.

The RCRE project model serves as a road map for dairy production facilities seeking to manage waste streams in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner.

The partnership between Foremost Farms and Schreiber Foods proactively addressed wastewater management and has resulted in a number of very tangible business, community and environmental benefits.

- RCRE produces an average of 667,000 kilowatt-hours per month, the equivalent of powering 830 homes.
- The first two years of operations saved more than 14,000 metric tons of carbon-dioxide-equivalent emissions.
- An average of 24 waste-hauling trucks per day have been removed from the roads.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Yahara Pride Farms Inc. Brooklyn, Wisconsin



Self-organized conservation group yields strong results

As demands for expanded environmental regulations began to rise in south-central Wisconsin, local dairies looked for opportunities to include farmers' voices and expertise in the discussion. Farmers were eager to use their comprehensive knowledge of the land to proactively support community and environmental health, along with fiscal sustainability for their farms.

The farmer-led Yahara Pride Farms conservation board was established in 2011 in partnership with the Clean Lakes Alliance. Founders included dairy farmers, agronomists and businessmen who shared a vision of creating a self-regulated, self-recognized and self-incentivized organization to improve the land and waterways of Dane County, Wisconsin. The group has successfully become an instrument for educating, funding and implementing best agricultural management practices in the Yahara Watershed.

The key elements of Yahara Pride Farms' model are increasing conservation practices and preserving water quality through effective manure management practices. A certification program recognizes individual farms for their nutrient management successes, and educational events help area farmers understand best practices for preserving soil and water quality.

One of the most innovative solutions implemented by Yahara Pride Farms is a cost-sharing program that gives farmers the opportunity to test innovative technologies with minimum risk. To make these and other activities possible, Yahara Pride Farms board members have secured support from area corporations, businesses, foundations and other agricultural organizations. Support includes grants, event sponsorships, in-kind donations, and discounted products and services for participating farmers.

Yahara Pride Farms is a clear example of how proactive, collaborative approaches by dairy farmers pay off for everyone involved. This model has the potential to make a difference across the country as other areas look to replicate its success.

This innovative water-quality protection partnership continues to grow rapidly, and its success has caught the attention of groups outside of the Yahara Watershed.

- More than 45 farms participated in the cost-share program in 2015.
- In 2014, 4,732 acres of cover crops were planted in the Yahara Watershed, keeping 629 pounds of phosphorus out of area waterways.
- Yahara Pride Farms has captured the attention of both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Natural Resources Conservation Service with its certification program, and is working on ways the agencies can support participating farmers.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Noblehurst Farms Inc.

Linwood, New York



Cooperative effort diverts food waste

Self-described as an “older millennial,” Chris Noble became passionate about green energy as a student at Cornell University. Ten years later, the seventh-generation farmer created a business model that uses partnerships within western New York to create green energy.

The cooperative project diverts food waste and scraps from local grocers, universities and schools to a digester at Noblehurst Farms Inc., Noble’s dairy operation. This effort keeps 100 tons of food waste from entering local landfills weekly and provides enough energy to power the 1,800-cow dairy.

“We started collecting food waste from local Wegmans stores more than two years ago. While Wegmans does a phenomenal job with its food-donation program, there’s still food that can’t be eaten by consumers, things like melon rinds or orange peels,” Noble said. “That’s where we come in.”

Noble solved a logistics hurdle by creating Natural Upcycling, which allows participating organizations to work together to efficiently and safely transport food waste. A simple but ingenious process collects and transports materials. Large rolling carts are staged at different locations throughout the store, and once they are full of food waste and scraps, the carts are transported to the farm’s digester.

Investment in specialized collection vehicles has been key to the project’s success, and has eased transportation of food waste back to the digester. That led the Rochester Institute of Technology and the York Central School District to implement the process as well. And, participation by Wegmans has grown from six stores to 30.

“I felt there was a real need to drive this mission forward,” Noble said. “Digesters are great for the environment and great for power reliability. The sun doesn’t always shine and the wind doesn’t always blow, but we can keep this digester and program going day and night.” And that helps Noble confidently plan for the future of Noblehurst Farms Inc.

Through its affiliate, **Natural Upcycling**, Noblehurst Farms Inc. and its food waste recycling partners:

- Divert 500 tons of waste from local landfills per month, reducing the production of greenhouse gases
- Avoid 409 tons of carbon dioxide per month, equivalent to 1,046 cars taken off the road

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Central Pennsylvania Food Bank

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

**Fill a Glass with Hope[®]: Providing Fresh Milk to Families in Need**

Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's fresh milk program is helping solve one of the most difficult distribution challenges facing food banks across the nation. Periodic surveys showed that fresh dairy, particularly milk, was in high demand, but was not readily available to the children and adults who depend on food assistance. That changed in June 2014, when several dairy industry partners joined the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank (CPF) in launching a fresh milk program that now provides 5,000 quarts - 20,000 servings - of milk per week to families in need. According to Joe Arthur, CPF's executive director, the program surpassed a major milestone in 2015 when it reached more than 1 million servings of milk distributed.

Working with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board, CPF was licensed as a charitable milk subdealer, allowing it to purchase milk directly from processors at a discounted price. The status and discount made it financially possible for milk to be distributed to the food bank's member partners in 27 counties through a refrigerated truck fleet.

CPF raised more than \$175,000 to fully fund its share of costs to procure milk from local processors through the Fill a Glass with Hope fundraising campaign supported by PA Dairymen's Association, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program. This funding made the fresh milk program financially stable and allowed it to help meet the dairy industry's goal of increasing the consumption of fluid milk while eliminating the "fresh milk gap" in its charitable network.

Building on the success of the CPF's model program, and a similar initiative at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, the fresh milk program is expanding to all eight of the Feeding Pennsylvania food banks in 2016. This first-ever statewide charitable milk program is expected to provide more than 2 million servings of milk this year.

**62,500
GALLONS****OF MILK - ENOUGH FOR
1 MILLION SERVINGS - WERE
DISTRIBUTED IN CENTRAL
PENNSYLVANIA IN 2015.**

Sponsors

From the start, the strength of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment has been the unprecedented collaboration with leaders and experts from within and outside the dairy industry. The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® is pleased to recognize the following organizations for their support of the 2016 awards program:

Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics | Conservation Technology Information Center
DSM Nutritional Products | The Milk Processor Education Program (MilkPEP)
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives | Syngenta

Meet our expert judging panel

An objective judging panel assessed the nominations and selected this year's winners. This panel included experts from academic institutions, government, dairy science organizations, nongovernmental organizations, business and trade media, and environmental and dairy industry leaders.

Judges

- Deborah Atwood, executive director, AGree
- Cheryl Baldwin, Ph.D., vice president of consulting, Pure Strategies
- Nina Bonnelycke, Office of Wastewater Management, US EPA
- Katie Brown, Ed.D., RDN, LD, national education director, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation
- Ann Burkhart, manager, ethical sourcing, Starbucks
- Jim Carper, editor-in-chief, *Dairy Foods*
- Ron DeHaven, executive vice president, American Veterinary Medical Association
- Jim Dickrell, editor and associate publisher, *Dairy Today*
- Susan Forsell, vice president, sustainability, McDonald's Corporation
- Matt Freund, dairy farmer, Freund's Farm and 2015 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award winner
- Suzy Friedman, director, agricultural sustainability, Environmental Defense Fund
- Julia Kadison, chief executive officer, MilkPEP
- Jeffrey Kaneb, executive vice president, HP Hood LLC and 2015 U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award winner
- Phil Lempert, founder, SupermarketGuru.com
- Randy Mooney, dairy farmer and chairman, National Milk Producers Federation
- Steve Richter, director of conservation in agricultural landscapes, The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin
- Paul Rovey, chairman, Dairy Management Inc.™ and owner, Rovey Dairy
- Carlos Saviani, vice president, sustainable foods, World Wildlife Fund
- Brian Sloboda, senior program manager, Cooperative Research Network, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- Connie Tipton, president and chief executive officer, International Dairy Foods Association
- Jason Weller, chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA

Past Winners

2015

Dorrich Dairy, Glenwood, Minnesota | Freund's Farm, East Canaan, Connecticut
Hilmar Cheese Company, Hilmar, California
HP Hood LLC and CleanWorld, Sacramento, California
Oregon Dairy Farm, Lititz, Pennsylvania | Nobis Dairy Farms, St. Johns, Michigan

Honorable Mentions:

Alliance Dairies, Trenton, Florida | T-Bar Dairy and White Gold Dairy, Porterville, California
Northern Illinois Food Bank and Prairie Farms Dairy, Geneva, Illinois

2014

Joseph Gallo Farms, Atwater, California | Maddox Dairy, Riverdale, California
Marshik Dairy, Pierz, Minnesota | McCarty Family Farms, Rexford, Kansas
Sensenig Dairy, Kirkwood, Pennsylvania | Vander Haak Dairy, Lynden, Washington

2013

Ballard Family Dairy & Cheese, Gooding, Idaho
Green Valley Dairy, Krakow, Wisconsin | Petersen Dairy Farm, Appleton, Wisconsin
Prairieland Dairy, Firth, Nebraska | Skyridge Farms, Sunnyside, Washington
Unilever – Henderson Ice Cream Plant, Henderson, Nevada

Honorable Mentions:

Fulper Family Farmstead, Lambertville, New Jersey
McCarty Family Farms, Rexford, Kansas

2012

Blue Spruce Farm, Bridport, Vermont
Brubaker Farms, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania | Darigold Inc., Seattle, Washington
Dean Foods Company and AgPower Partners (DF-AP LLC), Gooding, Idaho
Holsum Dairies LLC, Hilbert, Wisconsin | Werkhoven Dairy Inc., Monroe, Washington

Honorable Mention:

Oakhurst Dairy, Portland, Maine

Share These Stories!

What's the secret to sustainability? According to research conducted on behalf of the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy®, sustainability isn't about the size, age or location of a dairy operation. It's the management practices that make the difference. The most sustainable aspects of the dairy industry come from the way we run our businesses every day. And as more people are interested in learning where their food comes from, telling our stories of good stewardship helps to ensure that they can continue to feel good about choosing their favorite dairy foods and beverages.

Visit USDairy.com/Sustainability/Awards to learn more about how others are implementing sustainable practices and help spread the word by sharing these successes and yours with customers, communities and consumers.

