

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers exchange innovative ideas at annual meeting

SHEBOYGAN FALLS, Wis. — Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers gathered with industry partners and community members on Feb. 9, for their annual meeting.

The group's president, Brody Stapel of Double Dutch Dairy in Cedar Grove, welcomed attendees. He shared highlights from the past year and goals for the year ahead.

"Year over year, we see the number of cover crops in our watershed continue to grow," Stapel said. "Our goal is to continue that growth through 2024."

Farmers for Sustainable Food data collection specialist Shawn Wesener provided an update on SRPF's 2023 Member Conservation Practice Survey. There were 35 members involved in the survey encompassing 23,945 cropped acres, of which 33% had cover crops, 29% were no-till and 23% were planted green.

Sand County Foundation's director of agricultural systems Tricia Verville and Johnsonville's environmental leader Jane Kettler provided an update on a project with SRPF members and Johnsonville. Currently, four farms are involved in the pilot project, which aims to reduce phosphorus and soil sediment loss.

"For phosphorous in particular, sometimes it's not as evident on test results where parts are high," said Verville. "So we are conducting this project to get farmers a clearer understanding of their true phosphorus levels."

As part of the project, the farmers will be utilizing various methods to improve water quality, such as fertilizer management, manure management, prairie buffer strips and reduced tillage.

Continuum Ag's Vice President of Operations Carolyn King discussed how farmers can improve their profitability through soil health and lower carbon intensity (CI) grain production.

"If your corn's CI score is lower than the average, it will become more valuable to the biofuel company," explained King.

The demand for low-carbon-intensity crops comes from the 45Z tax credit offering anticipated to go into effect in 2025. Manufacturers could be eligible for these credits by reducing their carbon footprint.

King predicts that other industries, such as dairy or beef, could follow with something similar if it goes well for the biofuel sector.

“At some point, other industries will have to adopt something like this if it goes well for biofuel,” said King. “It would not surprise me at all if we start seeing the low-carbon label on other things as well.”

Jeff Gaska of Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water, Cade Christensen of CAL Drone Applications, Derrick Raspor of the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Carolyn King answered questions from attendees and shared more information during a panel discussion. The panel was moderated by Steve Hoffman of InDepth Agronomy.

The group held board elections to close out the meeting. Ken Strack Jr. of Strack View Farms and Chuck Born of Born Farm were elected as new board members. Tom Stemper of Stemper Hay & Grain and Joe Wagner retired from the board.

Other board members are Brody Stapel of Double Dutch Dairy, president; Mark Loehr of Loehr Dairy, vice president; Derek Sippel of Airy Point Dairy, secretary; Brian Huenink of Huenink’s Seed and Dairy, treasurer; Mark Breunig of A-OK Farms; Mike Mulder of Higher Ground Ranch.

Photos:

[Tricia Verville and Jane Kettler presenting](#)

[Carolyn King presenting](#)

[Panelist discussion](#)

[SRPF Board photo](#)

Caption: Mark Loehr, Chuck Born, Brian Huenink, Mark Breunig, Derek Sippel, Mike Mulder, Ken Strack Jr., Brody Stapel

About Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers:

Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers is a nonprofit farmer-led conservation group in the Sheboygan River watershed in Sheboygan and Fond du Lac Counties in Wisconsin whose members explore farming strategies that lead to improved soil health, greater farming efficiency, sustained profitability and reduced environmental impact. Members share information gained through field trials with fellow farmers and strive to foster an understanding of the role of agriculture in the community. More information: <https://srpfarmers.com>

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