

# REAL FACES of DAIRY



Share Your Story

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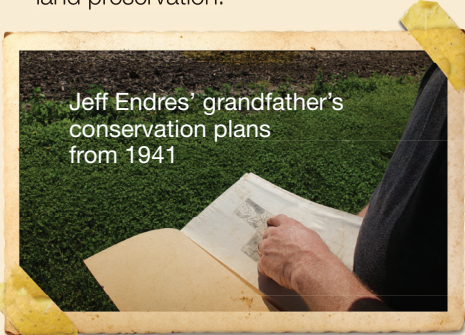
*As the original environmentalists, we have a love for the land, water and soil. The land is our legacy, and we work hard to protect it every day. Consumers don't always see that passion, so it is imperative that we share our story.*

## Stewardship starts with a plan. Share your environmental story.

by Joann Pipkin

Jeff Endres has a passion for agriculture—and for the soil he works. He respects it.

Growing up, Endres knew soil erosion was unacceptable. Even back in 1941, his grandfather had a conservation plan for the farm. The concept served the family's dairy operation well as the farm today is rooted firmly around land preservation.



Now, the family's Berryridge Farms is run by Jeff, his brothers Randy and Steve, and their families.

"I'm always looking for innovative and new ideas and ways to make (the land) better," Endres says. "That's what drives me, and I'm doing it more for the next generation than I am doing it for myself."

The Waunakee, Wisconsin, dairyman has become a true innovator in environmental stewardship through

conservation practices on his family's farm and through his work in helping found Yahara Pride Farms in 2011.

Yahara Pride is a unique collaboration between dairy producers, environmental services and community members. Yahara Pride's cooperator farms work in unique ways to manage phosphorus and other nutrients on their farms while improving soil and water quality through conservation practices in the Yahara Watershed near Madison.

Through Yahara Pride, Endres and other producers hope to share agriculture's story alongside the organization's soil and water conservation initiative. "We've got so much to tell," he says. "Agriculture is operating at a higher level (of stewardship) than the public realizes."

Endres works diligently every day conserving the land he farms—but so do you. As we look to environmental stewardship as the next pillar in the Real Faces of Dairy Pledge, we're reminded that farmers are the original environmentalists. By taking the pledge, YOU can show dairy customers your commitment to the land. Caring for the land, air and water forms the foundation in producing a safe, wholesome dairy product for consumers—and it creates your dairy legacy.



### Step Outside the Barn

In the mid-2000s, Endres began working with a manure-management task force in the Yahara Watershed. The experience was a real eye-opener for him as a dairyman as he realized the decision makers really didn't know much about agriculture.

"If we want to stay ahead of regulations, then agriculture has got to be more proactive rather than reactive," he explains.

That mindset, in turn, helped bring Yahara Pride to fruition. In partnership with the Clean Lakes Alliance, Endres and other dairy farmers in the Madison area have developed a following



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You are the Real Face of Dairy, the original environmentalist, the first to implement sustainable practices and the most passionate about caring for your animals.

As Balchem celebrates 50 years of service to agriculture, we look to bring the tools you need to share your story with your community and those who want to know you and your farm. Let's work together to bring transparency and understanding.

Join the Real Faces of Dairy celebration and be a part of securing the future.

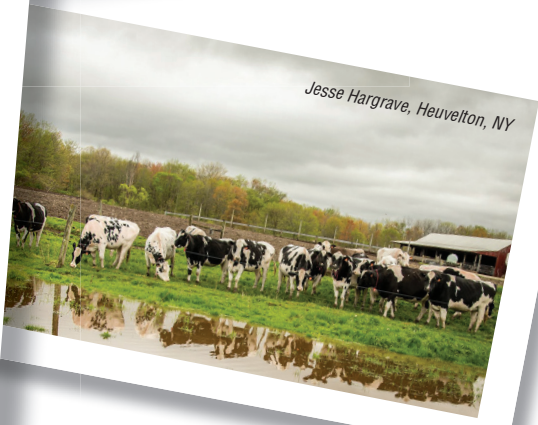
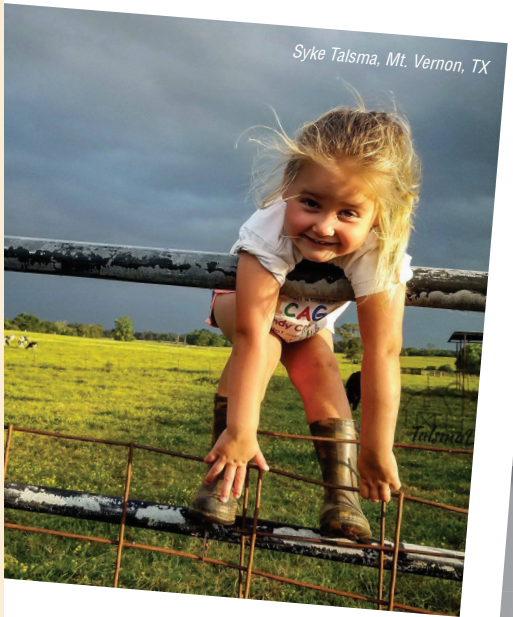
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“ We have a responsibility to our neighbors. We need to inform them of what we do and why. ”  
~ Jeff Endres, Waunakee, WI



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– Jeff Endres,  
Berryridge Farms, Waunakee, Wis.



through social media and a variety of community events.

Yahara Pride members go through a voluntary certification program, which signifies they have identified conservation practices that could be improved or changed on their farm. Certified farmers take pride in good stewardship that is recognized throughout the agricultural and urban communities in their area.

Yahara Pride hosts a variety of educational events for the public including farm tours, its Ag Innovation Days and a watershed-wide conference to help spread the word on how area farmers work to protect the environment. The group also publishes its *Forward Farmer* newsletter to educate producers on cost-share programs and ways they can practice conservation.

“Any time we can put together something that’s a win-win for the farmer’s bottom line and for conservation, we should be doing it,” Endres says. “We have to show that agriculture is making a difference, so (through Yahara Pride) we’re documenting everything we do.”



A 20-year member of his local planning committee, Endres encourages other dairy farmers to get involved in their own communities. Towns are vital to the future of dairy farming. “Don’t be afraid to take your expertise and share it with the community,” he says.

### Take the Step that Matters

As dairy producers, you care for the land you work on because you know it’s the right thing to do. Through generations, great strides have already been taken in land improvements and conservation. But your work is far from over.

Like you, consumers care about the environment and how their food is produced. Today’s dairy customers are invested in their food, its safety and nutritional value more than ever before.

In February 2017, the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) program launched a new module titled the FARM Environmental Stewardship program. This program collects confidential data on participating farmers’ energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. In result, these farmers will be able to monitor results and see potential cost reductions and efficiency gains. Through its commitment to environmental stewardship, FARM helps producers demonstrate their commitment to quality farm-management practices and producing safe, wholesome dairy products.

“We’re focused on earning the trust of consumers, reassuring our dairy customers and really telling the good story of the U.S. dairy farmer where there’s currently a vacuum of information that’s not being told to the average customer,” explains Ryan Bennett, senior director of

industry and environmental affairs for the National Milk Producers Federation.

In the long run, Bennett hopes the program not only provides value up the supply chain but also provides value back to the farmer.

Today’s dairy isn’t the same as the one your parents had. Communities have changed. Farms have changed—and will continue to do so in the future.

Being active and engaged in your community is where you can start bridging the gap. “Be aware of where things are headed and make sure that you’re following that trend, so you can grow with the community rather than the community growing against you,” Bennett says. “Don’t hide from your neighbors. Think about how you’ll grow in the future.”

Hannah Thompson-Weeman, vice president of communications for the Animal Agriculture Alliance, says her group aims to help bridge that gap between farm and fork.

“We are seeing a lot more focus in the media and in customer questions and activist groups about the impact of animal agriculture on the environment,” she explains. “It is usually dairy and beef that are hit the hardest. And, they take the brunt of that misinformation.”

Going against the grain to communicate what’s really happening environmentally on dairy farms is imperative. “Farmers and ranchers are completely keyed in to sustainability, because what’s more sustainable than wanting a business that you can pass down to the next generation? We need to be mindful of communicating that message,” Thompson-Weeman says.

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Watch the latest RFOD feature on U.S. Farm Report here [http://bit.ly/USFR\\_RFODPagels](http://bit.ly/USFR_RFODPagels)



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Making a commitment to the environment, to your community and to being a good neighbor is part of your business. While you might think it's just common sense for others to know that's what you do, that's really not the case.

"The practices that you do to be sustainable need to be written down as part of your mission, part of your organization's business strategy," Thompson-Weeman says. "If you have a website or social media presence, then you need to be proactively sharing what you are doing so people know you are committed to being environmentally sustainable and responsible."



## 4 Tips to Get You Environmentally Ready



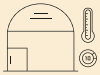
1

Get information on manure-management systems. Your farm's Nutrient Management Plan or Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan might contain details on manure management.



3

Collect documents on electricity and fuel consumption. Utility bills might be useful for determining electricity and natural gas use. Information on other fuels might be found in purchase records or usage logs.



2

If you have an anaerobic digester, contact the company that installed or operates the digester for information on conversion efficiency and the percentage of electricity or heat used.



4

Consult grazing records or pasture-management spreadsheets, if it applies to your operation. A Nutrient Management Plan might also contain pasture information.

## Share Your Environmental Story

As environmental issues weigh heavily on the minds of our customers, continual improvement in our farms through good stewardship and conservation practices only becomes more important.

"Our customers are going to continue to have questions about the way we produce their food, and the onus is really on us if we want to continue to have a market for our product," Thompson-Weeman says. "We must remember to answer concerns and to share information and be open and transparent."

"Don't be afraid to share what's going on," Thompson-Weeman says. "You might not think it's that interesting, but for people who have never been on a farm or never seen these practices in place, it's the most fascinating thing in the world."

For dairy producers like Jeff Endres, stepping outside the barn to share his environmental stewardship story is his way of giving back and making a difference.

"It's a world market. We need to be the best of the best," he says. "Environmental stewardship is the thing that will be able to separate us from everybody else."

You, too, have a message to share with your local community. While water quality is a sensitive issue in Endres' community, air quality or manure management might be the hot button in your area. Knowing what your local community is passionate about is imperative to proactively addressing and sharing your own environmental stewardship message.

—Source: Adapted from **Getting Ready – FARM Environmental Stewardship Guide**. Get more information on the National Dairy FARM (Farmer's Assuring Responsible Management) by visiting [nationaldairyfarm.com](http://nationaldairyfarm.com).

The Animal Agriculture Alliance has resources for dairy farmers to help share their environmental story. From social media posts to infographics and a complete resource library, the alliance can assist you in sharing your environmental message.



### Take the Pledge

This year, the Real Faces of Dairy wants to help you share your dairy story with your community. Next month, we'll share the fourth pillar of the **Real Faces of Dairy Pledge**; we are producing healthy dairy products every day. We'd love to see your photos and hear from you. Go to our website for more information. [www.realfacesofdairy.com](http://www.realfacesofdairy.com)