

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Manitowoc County farmers showcase sustainability advances and research at annual meeting

MANITOWOC, Wis. — Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative, a farmer-led watershed group in Manitowoc County, held its 2026 Annual Meeting and Forum at the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center on Wednesday, January 28. Farmers, local agricultural professionals and community members gathered to learn about conservation-focused research efforts and sustainability progress made by members on their farms.



Seven Rivers' president, Jesse Dvorachek, welcomed attendees and opened the meeting with a look back at the group's accomplishments in 2025 and a presentation of its goals for 2026.

"It has been a collective effort from everyone in this room, working together and collaborating to get to where we are today," Dvorachek said. "I am eager to see how we can continue to build on our momentum and make a significant impact on our community."

Aaron Augustian with Augustian Farms discussed the benefits of adaptive irrigation technology with 360 Rain. The machine offers soil health benefits by delivering on-farm nutrients to growing crops multiple times throughout the growing season.

Greg Olson, Field Projects Director with the Sand County Foundation, shared an update on a soil health project involving area farms. Through soil sampling and soil sensors, the project aims to enhance understanding of how to improve soil structure and the relationship between enhanced soil structure, cover crops and reduced-till or no-till practices.

Johnny Behrendt from Pheasants Forever discussed turning low yield areas in a field into profit with the use of prairie strips.

"Prairie strips offer a win-win solution when it comes to balancing wildlife habitat and increasing farm profits," Behrendt said. "They also help improve water quality and soil health."



Public programming concluded with a tech, tools and tactics panel moderated by Natural Resources Conservation Services field coordinator Barry Bubolz. Panelists included Trevor Balthazor, Riesterer & Schnell; Jesse Dvorachek, Ed's Acres; Aaron Augustian, Augustian Farms; Greg Olson, Sand County Foundation; and Johnny

Behrendt, Pheasants Forever. Discussion focused on new technologies and conservation advancements that are helping farmers continue to improve.

Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative board members include: Jesse Dvorachek, president, Ed's Acres; Ethan Ulness, vice president, Hi-Tower Farms; Nick Fitzgerald, treasurer, Soaring Eagle Dairy; Zak Kenneke, secretary, Libertyland Farms; Michael Slattery; Steve Orth, Orthland Dairy; Don Rabitz, Rabitz XF; Adam Kolb, Kolb Farms; Ryan Sullivan, Sullivan Family Farms; and Steve Tesarik, French Creek Cattle.

For more information about Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative, visit www.sevenriverssoilcooperative.com.

Photos:

[Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative logo](#)

[Jesse Dvorachek presenting](#)

[Panel discussion](#)

About Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative:

Seven Rivers Soil Cooperative Inc. is a farmer-led not-for-profit organization working to protect and improve the land and water that sustains our communities and farms. Through peer-to-peer learning, evidence-based research and improved access to resources, we're equipping ourselves and our neighbors with the capacity to better care for the environment, strengthen our farms and build thriving communities. More information: www.sevenriverssoilcooperative.com/.

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