

2014  
**Green Tier Annual Report**  
**Crave Brothers Farms**



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February 2015

## **Executive Summary**

Crave Brothers Farm, LLC (CBF) is the name of our dairy farm. It is located in Dodge County near Waterloo WI. Our arm operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, taking care of over 1400 milking cows and more than 1000 head of young stock. In 2014 we produced approximately 40 million pounds of milk that was sent to processors to make a variety of dairy products. In the fall of 2014 we restarted our cheese production. The milk piped directly to our adjacent cheese factory (Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese, LLC.) is used to make a variety of premium cheeses that are sold locally and regionally. Approximately 20 percent of milk production exceeds our cheese making capacity. The additional milk is routinely shipped via truck to other processors.

To feed and care for our cows and young stock we manage over 2500 acres of alfalfa, corn for silage and grain, soybeans, wheat and pasture. We utilize various methods, practices and procedures to be good stewards of the land and raise our crops in an environmentally responsible manner.

A short history of our farm was provided in the 2013 report. Needless to say, we continue to evolve in our stewardship of the land as we implement our succession plan. We have a team of managers and associates who have roles and responsibilities to successfully operate the farm daily while providing for a long term commitment to land and people. Our farm and adjacent cheese factory employ between 70 and 80 full time associates.

Below is a list of the Targets for 2015. As the economy, technology and regulations change, our targets are adjusted to meet those challenges. However; the list of Targets are based upon our current significant aspects in accordance with our policy and process for continual improvement.

1. Documentation of our program for elimination and minimization of leachate
2. Improve the regulatory registry to track completion of the required activities
3. Participate in the study of plastic Ag. Film recycling
4. Continually improve storm water separation to keep process area and non-process area storm water separated.

### **Internal Audit of the EMS**

CBF uses an EMS calendar to continually review elements and practices of the EMS. In addition we utilize a competent third party to assist assure the review is complete and aid in understanding our options to manage the EMS. An internal EMS audit was performed in 2014. All sections of the EMS documentation were reviewed and activities compared to the documented procedures. No major or minor non-conformities were observed.

## **Environmental Performance**

### **Renewable and Energy Saving Program**

#### Roles and resources

- The Crave Family and employees acted as researchers, discovering and embracing our options. Discussions with both the private and public sectors, aided us in developing the most energy efficient systems.
- In 2014 the storm water drainage system associated with new feed storage was improved to keep clean storm water from being influenced by farm activities. These activities also improved storage conditions for feed, eliminated mud tracking into process areas and eliminated standing water thus eliminating mosquito growth areas.
- Motors and pumps were upgraded to more energy efficient models for potable water system.
- Installed additional pressure tanks on the high capacity well to establish more consistent water pressure (reduces line fluctuations) and reduces energy consumption from frequent pumping.
- Provided water conservation, energy conservation and land stewardship talks to the National 4-H Dairy conference. Also speaker at the Dairy Science Conference regarding emphasizing management role in creating a culture of environmental stewardship in our dairy operations. Spoke about our participation in the Green Tier Program. About 500 attendees were at these events.
- We provided a tour and exchange of information about environmentally beneficial farming practices to roughly 250 visitors in 2014.

#### **Closing summary:**

We reported in 2013 that our enclosed manure systems mentioned above allow for year round success in feeding the digesters, and year round operation of the digesters. Ag Star data has shown this digester system to be perhaps the most efficient in the country. It is estimated to have a 95% to 98% online rating and a BTU recovery of 68%. We maintained equivalent performance in 2014. We continue to monitor and enhance our system when opportunities present themselves.

- We continue to improve the pasture opportunity for heifers and dry cows. This provides animal exercise and weight management while maintaining the quality of the grazing area.
- The value of conversations we initiate and comments we seek from our many visitors provides them a window into our sustainability practices, a blend of modern farming including the usage of pastures. The comments provide the farm a window into the perceptions, amazements and concerns of our interested parties.
- In 2014 the operating technology was upgraded in cropping equipment. This resulted in more accurate applications of nutrients and roughly 7% less fuel use.

## **Social Benefits**

### **Conservation/Environmental Stewardship**

In 2014 we commissioned a woodworking shop for our father. He established our farming ethics and land stewardship legacy. His activities using a renewable resource to create fine furniture and other hand crafted wood products speaks to the foundation of our culture. We wish to pass along that culture of stewardship and detailed attention to the work we do the next two farm generations.

### **Social-Communication**

Below is a list of the different avenues we take to achieve our goal of transparency and ultimately social sustainability.

#### **Replication**

We have created a replicable EMS that works with our daily business practices. We do this because we strive to be good stewards of the environment. We want to be transparent for the dairy industry. If others in the dairy industry are looking to develop and implement an EMS we are happy to share our experiences with them.

#### **WDNR Relationship**

Crave Brothers Farm has worked with several divisions and departments within WDNR. We are working with our single point, Tom Nowakowski, at WDNR to:

- a. Inform the WDNR of our processes and activities through required reporting and voluntary reporting.
- b. Identify and work with various WDNR specialists on specific project areas.

We feel that the collaboration and cooperation with our SPOC (single point of contact) has been excellent.