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## **2025 annual report showcases conservation improvements in Sheboygan River Basin through sustainable farming practices**

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. — Mark Loehr is dedicated to improving his farm’s soil health and enhancing sustainable practices. He’s motivated to create a better environment for his children to one day join the farm and for his community to thrive.



Loehr farms alongside his brother, Joe, on their family farm in Mt. Calvary, Wis. Loehr Dairy has been operating for nearly 150 years and four generations.

“Our kids are young, but we’re motivated to make our farm more productive, efficient and sustainable for their future families,” Loehr said. “We’re continuously working to solve problems and try new things, so that our farm can be in good shape for the fifth generation in the future.”

The Loehrs have been no-till planting since 2016. They have learned through some challenges along the way that no-till planting is most successful on their farm when combined with planting cover crops.

“For us, no-till has only been successful when we’re also planting cover crops,” Loehr said. “Having root mass in the soil is beneficial for supporting earthworm activity and life in the soil. Our goal is to maintain a living crop in the soil throughout the entire year.”

Loehr has been part of the Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers since the group's founding. The farmer-led watershed conservation group provides opportunities to network with other local farmers and learn about current sustainable farming research.

“Attending field days and listening to expert speakers is great, but hearing from other farmers is truly the most impactful for me,” he said. “We’re sharing real-life experiences and those conversations are meaningful when it comes to bringing ideas back to our farm.”

### **Annual survey results**

As part of SRPF membership, Loehr participated in the 2025 Annual Member Conservation Practice Survey. This is the eighth year the group has documented and publicly shared members’ collective efforts.

The group, composed of 36 members, implemented various conservation practices including planting 6,988 acres of cover crops, using no-till on 10,143 acres, and planting into cover crops (otherwise known as “planting green”) on 2,488 acres. They also have 16,481 acres participating in a nutrient management plan.

The potential environmental benefits of these practices:

- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 3,543 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents, which is equal to greenhouse gas emissions produced by 844 cars driven for a year.
- Prevention of sediment loss from farm fields of 24,733 tons, equivalent to 2,473 dump trucks of soil.
- Reduction of phosphorus runoff by 34,858 pounds, potentially preventing 17.4 million pounds of algae growth in local water bodies.

Data was analyzed by Houston Engineering, Inc. and Farmers for Sustainable Food.

“I have been quite proud to be part of a group that has achieved these outcomes and created this impactful change within our community.” Loehr said.

Farmers interested in joining SRPF can find more information on [srpfarmers.com](http://srpfarmers.com).

### **By the numbers**

Number of acres covered by conservation practices among Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers members:

- 2018 — 20,427
- 2019 — 72,947
- 2020 — 89,080
- 2021 — 86,294
- 2022 — 96,920
- 2023 — 99,494
- 2024 — 89,260
- 2025 — 78,569

*\*Multiple conservation practices can be used on a farm field*

Potential impact of conservation practices in 2025:

- Phosphorus runoff reduction — 34,858 pounds
- Sediment erosion reduction — 24,733 tons
- Carbon dioxide emission reduction — 3,543 metric tons

**Images:**

[2025 survey results graphic](#)

[Mark Loehr family photo](#)

### **About Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers:**

Sheboygan River Progressive Farmers is a nonprofit farmer-led watershed 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.

The group receives support from members and partners, including agricultural and environmental organizations and the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. More information: <https://srpfarmers.com>

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