

OUTSTANDING SUPPLY CHAIN COLLABORATION

General Mills & Foremost Farms

Reed City, Michigan



General Mills and Foremost Farms USA Collaborate to Reduce GHG Emissions

As a leading dairy cooperative, Foremost Farms knows its customers and consumers are interested in what's happening on their members' farms and how they're conserving resources, protecting the planet and caring for animals.

General Mills, one of Foremost Farms' largest customers, is committed to purpose-driven growth powered by a sustainable supply chain, as the health of its business depends on the health of the planet. As part of this effort, the company has set an ambitious science-based target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 28 percent across its full value chain by 2025 to help mitigate climate change.

General Mills knew the U.S. dairy industry also had set a voluntary goal to reduce its GHG intensity 25 percent by 2020. As a priority ingredient for several of its well-known brands, such as Yoplait yogurt, Foremost Farms was an obvious partner for GHG reduction collaboration.

In 2016, Foremost Farms convened a powerful network of 16 Michigan dairy farmers who supply milk to General Mills' yogurt plan to join global sourcing and sustainability experts from General Mills to share ideas, align toward common goals and ultimately pilot National Milk Producers' FARM Environmental Stewardship (FARM ES) module.

The FARM ES module is a science-based, on-farm assessment tool that provides a comprehensive estimate of a farm's GHG emissions and energy use. The tool allows farmers to learn about their carbon footprint, identify areas for improvement, explore practices that add environmental benefits, track performance and reduce costs. It also helps farmers re-evaluate equipment such as fans, lights, compressors and pumps, as well as operational efficiencies from increased training or improved practices.

The group also invited experts and vendors from Newtrient, EnSave and Consumers Energy to inform them on available innovations and collaborate on financial assistance as well as other incentives to help reduce the costs of implementing these improvements.

In all, the dairy farms that participated in the pilot saw a combined 11 percent reduction in GHG over a three-year period, which outperformed the national and regional benchmark averages. These dairy farmers have been completely transparent in driving sustainability initiatives in collaboration with General Mills and its partners by driving improvements in operations with energy, cow and feed management. This effort was only made possible through the efforts and leadership of these industry-leading producers.

16 dairy farmers saw a combined 11 percent reduction in GHG emissions after using the FARM Environmental Stewardship Program over a three-year period.

