

## NEWS

# SOIL HEALTH INSTITUTE SELECTED AS SOIL SCIENCE RESEARCH PARTNER FOR DAIRY FEED, SOIL AND WATER OUTCOMES FOR THE NET ZERO INITIATIVE

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**Research Triangle Park, NC, June 17, 2021** – The Soil Health Institute (SHI), the non-profit charged with safeguarding and enhancing the vitality and productivity of soils, has been selected as the soil science research partner for **Dairy Soil & Water Regeneration**, an essential project to advance the work of the U.S. dairy Net Zero Initiative (NZI).

In support of the NZI, the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) has awarded a \$10 million grant as the on-farm pathway to advance the industrywide 2050 Environmental Stewardship Goals set by the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

The funding will support a six-year project – **“Dairy Soil & Water Regeneration: building soil health to reduce greenhouse gases, improve water quality and enable new economic benefits”** – that will produce data to be broadly shared among the dairy community to:

- Provide measurement-based assessments of dairy’s greenhouse gas footprint for feed production
  - Set the stage for new market opportunities related to carbon, water quality, and soil health
- The FFAR grant will be matched by financial contributions from NZI partners such as Nestlé, the dairy industry, including Newtrient, and in-kind support for a total of \$23.2 million. The funds will be managed by the Dairy Research Institute (DRI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity founded and staffed by Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) to conduct vital research on behalf of the industry. SHI will work alongside DMI scientists to address research gaps in feed production and manure-based fertilizers that, once filled, will enable new markets, incentives, and investments in dairy sustainability.

“Addressing the U.S. dairy industry’s emissions is a critical solution to climate change,” said FFAR Executive Director Dr. Sally Rockey. “I know dairy farmers are working hard to decrease their environmental footprint and I’m thrilled to support their efforts by advancing research needed to adopt climate-smart practices on dairy farms across the country.”

Through foundational science, on-farm pilots, and development of new product markets, NZI aims to knock down barriers and create incentives for farmers that will lead to economic viability and positive environmental impact.

“After six years, we will have data that accurately reflect our farms’ greenhouse gas footprint for dairy crop rotations with consideration for soil health management practices and new manure-based products,” said Dr. Wallace, senior vice president of environmental research for DMI. “We expect to develop critical insights th

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soil health outcomes, such as carbon sequestration, with practice and technology adoption. This will provide important background information to support the development of new carbon and water quality markets.”

Specifically, SHI will be responsible for:

- Providing the design, implementation, and technical expertise, from plot to national scales, for measuring soil health, greenhouse gas emissions, and soil carbon storage.
- Quantifying the role of new manure products and soil health systems for reducing the greenhouse gas footprint of dairy feed production.

“Through the adoption of soil health systems, research has shown many on-farm and environmental benefits,” said Dr. Cristine Morgan, Chief Scientific Officer at the Soil Health Institute, “We’re excited to apply these learnings to a dairy context and validate, beyond a proof of concept, real-world outcomes of adopting soil health management and novel manure products on soil health, water quality, and greenhouse gases that have a positive impact for the planet.”

The project will be executed across four dairy regions responsible for about 80 percent of U.S. milk production: Northeast, Lakes, Mountain, and Pacific. It entails a collaboration of NZI, the Soil Health Institute, and leading dairy research institutions, including: Cornell University, University of California at Davis, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Platteville, University of Vermont, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS) Northwest Irrigation and Soils Research in Kimberly, Idaho.

Dozens of dairies representing climates and soils of these major production regions will participate in a baseline survey of soil health and carbon storage. Additionally, eight farms, including five operating dairies, two university research dairies, and one USDA ARS research farm, will participate in the project. These pilots will be used to engage farmers in soil health management practices and monitor changes in greenhouse gas emissions, soil carbon storage, soil health, and water quality.

FFAR builds public-private partnerships to support bold science that fills critical research gaps. Working with partners across the private and public sectors, FFAR identifies urgent challenges facing the food and agriculture industry and funds research to develop solutions.

NZI is an industry-wide effort led by six national dairy organizations: DMI, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy, International Dairy Foods Association, Newtrient, National Milk Producers Federation, and the U.S. Dairy Export Council. This collaboration represents a critical pathway on U.S. dairy’s sustainability journey.

Ultimately, NZI hopes to support the industry to advance toward its collective goals, realize untapped value to support economic viability, and enable other industries and communities to be more sustainable.

For more information about dairy sustainability, visit [www.usdairy.com/sustainability](http://www.usdairy.com/sustainability).

## ABOUT SOIL HEALTH INSTITUTE

The Soil Health Institute is a global non-profit with a mission to safeguard and enhance the vitality and productivity of soil through scientific research and advancement. We bring together leaders in soil health science and the industry to help farmers, ranchers, and landowners adopt soil health systems that build drought resilience, stabilize yield, and benefit their bottom line. The Institute’s team of scientists, holding doctorates in various soil science and related disciplines, has developed highly effective soil health targets and standardized measurements to quantify progress at achieving regenerative and sustainable agricultural systems, and leads the cutting-edge fields of carbon sequestration and decoding the soil microbiome. Healthy soils are the foundation for rejuvenating our land. Together, we can create a secure future for all, mitigate the effects of climate change, and help agriculture and organizations meet production and environmental goals at scale. Visit [soilhealthinstitute.org](http://soilhealthinstitute.org) to learn more and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

## ABOUT DAIRY MANAGEMENT INC.

Dairy Management Inc.™ (DMI) is funded by America's 35,000 dairy farmers, as well as dairy importers. Created to help increase sales and demand for dairy products, DMI and its related organizations work to increase demand for dairy through research, education and innovation, and to maintain confidence in dairy foods, farms and businesses. DMI manages National Dairy Council and the American Dairy Association, and founded the U.S. Dairy Export Council, and the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

## ABOUT THE INNOVATION CENTER FOR U.S. DAIRY®

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is a forum that brings together the dairy community to address the changing needs and expectations of consumers through a framework of shared best practices and accountability. Initiated in 2008 by dairy farmers, Innovation Center members collaborate on efforts that are important both to us and our valued customers – issues like animal care, food safety, nutrition and health, the environment and economics. The Innovation Center is committed to continuous improvement from farm to table, striving to provide the world responsibly produced dairy foods that nourish people, strengthen communities and foster a sustainable future.

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR FOOD & AGRICULTURE RESEARCH

The [Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) builds public-private partnerships to fund bold research addressing big food and agriculture challenges. FFAR was established in the 2014 Farm Bill to increase public agriculture research investments, fill knowledge gaps and complement USDA's research agenda. FFAR's model matches federal funding from Congress with private funding, delivering a powerful return on taxpayer investment. Through collaboration and partnerships, FFAR advances actionable science benefiting farmers, consumers and the environment.