

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Feb. 25, 2025

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## **Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance annual meeting highlights benefits of manure in improving soil health**

CHILTON, Wis. — The Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance held its annual meeting on Feb. 17, bringing together farmers, supporters and community members to discuss the group's ongoing conservation initiatives and hear from guest speakers, including Jamie Patton, state soil health coordinator with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



With many years of soil health research experience, Patton shared her knowledge of soil biology and using manure to enhance soil health.

“We need to think about how we can use manure for next-level soil health,” she said. “Manure doesn’t add microbes to the soil, it stimulates those already there, enhancing the soil biology.”

Jodie Weyland, program manager for the Between the Lakes Demonstrations Farm Network, gave an overview of the program and its current conservation project efforts. Some of the projects include drone applications, interesting trials and various cover crop species mixes.

This organization is one of six demonstration farm networks across the state. It involves farmers in Calumet, Manitowoc and Sheboygan County who are testing new conservation systems and technologies with the goal of reducing phosphorus run-off.

Farmers for Sustainable Food sustainability projects specialist Marti Viste shared results from CCASA’s 2024 Member Conservation Practice Survey.

“In 2024, we saw a significant increase from the year before in terms of conservation practice use across the acres involved in this survey,” Viste said.

The survey involved 23 farms and 27,776 cropland acres, of which 10,125 acres had cover crops, 4,253 were no-till with cover crops and 3,500 acres were reduced till with cover crops.

CCASA president John Schwarz of Schwarz Farms thanked attendees and partners for their ongoing support of the group.

“It’s always great to be able to gather together with fellow farmers and supporters for our annual meetings,” Schwarz said. “We appreciate your continued support and contributions to our ever-growing group.”

During the business portion of the meeting, members re-elected two CCASA board members, John Schwarz, president and John VandenBoom, treasurer. Other board members include vice president Kurt Schneider, secretary Lauren Danes, Ken Rach, Paul Meyers, Jim Casper, David Geiser and Bob Danes. The board advisors are Anthony Reali, Autumn Gomez-Tagle and Kristin Birschbach.

**Photos:**

[CCASA board photo](#)

**Logo:**

[CCASA Logo](#)

**About Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance**

Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance is a nonprofit group of innovative farmers, committed community members and other professional partners dedicated to championing sustainable farming practices that protect water quality and build healthy soil. [www.calumetcounty.org/CCASA](http://www.calumetcounty.org/CCASA)

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