



# IMPACT REPORT

2023

Certified



Corporation

**SMALL FARMS, BIG HEARTS, BRIGHTER FUTURE**

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CEO.....	03
MISSION & SUSTAINABILITY GOALS.....	05
SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.....	07
ANIMAL WELFARE.....	09
ORGANIC PRODUCTION.....	10
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.....	12
2023 COST-SHARE.....	13
INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE.....	14
PROMOTING POLLINATORS.....	16
IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH.....	18
CLIMATE SMART ORGANIC EGG PROJECT.....	19
STRATEGIC SOURCING.....	21
FARMER SNAPSHOTS.....	23
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.....	26
FEEDING COMMUNITIES.....	27
EMPLOYEE WELLBEING.....	28

# INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CEO

## SMALL FARMS, BIG HEARTS, BRIGHTER FUTURE

Dear Friends and Supporters of Handsome Brook Farms,

It is with great pleasure and a profound sense of purpose that I welcome you to the 2023 Impact Report. I am both honored and excited to share with you the remarkable journey we have embarked upon over the past year. This report not only highlights our accomplishments but also underscores our commitment to cultivating a brighter, more sustainable future.

Our commitment to animal welfare remains at the forefront of our practices, ensuring that every egg is produced with quality treatment and care. In the following sections, you will discover how we've harnessed the power of regenerative agriculture to not only produce exceptional eggs but also to promote resiliency and biodiversity.

Our engagement with the local communities surrounding our farms is a cornerstone of our identity. We believe in giving back, fostering connections, and supporting one another. This report will showcase the initiatives that have allowed us to make a positive impact on food security, access, and the well-being of those who call these communities home.

As stewards of the land, we've continued to prioritize sustainability, embracing renewable energy, increasing transparency, and reducing emissions through USDA grants and a company Cost-Share program.

One of the significant milestones of the year was the completion of our state-of-the-art hard-boiled egg facility, nestled in the heart of Tennessee. This strategic addition allows us to expand our offerings and provide you with even more options while upholding our commitment to quality, animal welfare, and sustainability.

As we reflect on the milestones of 2023, we also look towards future expansion. Our journey is far from over, and we are excited to set new goals, innovate further, and continue making strides towards a more sustainable, compassionate, and connected world.

Thank you for being part of our story, for your support, and for joining us on this journey. Together, we are redefining what it means to act handsomely in terms of food system impact by uplifting our farm network, stewarding the land, maximizing animal welfare, and perpetuating thriving communities.

With gratitude,

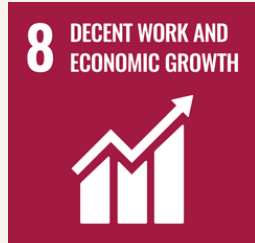


Jordan Czeizler  
Chief Executive Officer

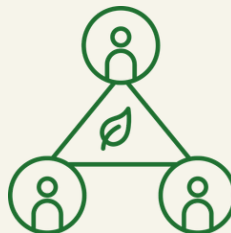




# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## HANDSOME'S PART



# OUR HANDSOME MISSION

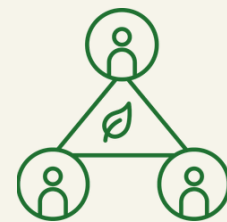
## Regenerative Farms

Advance farm practices that ensure the highest level of animal welfare and restore the earth's water, soil, and biodiversity



## Thriving Communities

Support flourishing livelihoods among our farmers, suppliers, employees, and customers; Uphold a preference for local sourcing, and coop to carton transparency



## Responsible Operations

From cradle to carton, adopt practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect natural resources. Includes energy use, sourcing, and packaging.



# SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

- I. Advance regenerative agriculture practices across 100% of the farms in our network
  
- II. Improve the sustainability of our cartons
  
- II. Reduce Scope 3 GHG emissions intensity by 10% across our supply chain by 2027



# SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

## An Emphasis on Responsible Operations

At Handsome Brook Farms, our commitment to sustainable practices is at the foundation of our operations. In 2023 we focused on responsible operations, efficiency, and transparency.

We launched a strategic partnership with a hard-boiled facility, finding uses for eggs that didn't meet table egg standards into high-quality, ready-to-eat hard-boiled eggs. This innovative approach aims to reduce waste in our supply chain and maximize resource utilization.



We continue to prioritize regenerative agriculture initiatives throughout our farm network. Our concerted efforts aim to reduce environmental impact and promote soil health and biodiversity. By championing organic farming and land management, we've taken significant strides towards a more sustainable agricultural model, safeguarding the earth's natural resources for future generations.



In addition to our operational advancements, our USDA grant work stands as a testament to our commitment to broader public health. Through strategic collaborations and community engagement initiatives, we've expanded our reach beyond our operational boundaries. These efforts have fostered a network of support for sustainable practices, creating a ripple effect in the communities we serve.





# ANIMAL WELFARE

## Upholding Standards Across Operations

We hold ourselves to rigorous pasture-raised standards, ensuring our hens thrive in a healthy environment. Collaborating closely with esteemed animal welfare organizations, we've continually reinforced our dedication to humane practices.

We're steadfast in our utilization of humane certifications, providing verifiable assurances that our farms operate with the highest welfare standards. In the past year, significant strides have been made in expanding our network, with 13 new farms coming on board.

The recent USDA Organic Poultry & Livestock ruling holds profound implications for our operations. Handsome Brook Farms actively engaged in shaping this regulation, advocating for its passage while providing essential feedback to refine and enhance its provisions. HBF's Compliance Director played a pivotal role in these discussions, advocating for sensible adjustments that would align with established animal welfare standards.

Amendments notably addressed concerns regarding excessive scratch areas, proposing more realistic and welfare-conscious specifications. Moreover, the ruling advocates for practical considerations, such as accommodating chicken transport times within welfare frameworks.

Our participation in this legislation underscores our commitment to balancing organic land and hen management with operational viability.



---

# ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## Increasing Access to Pasture



While acknowledging the constraints of housing regulations, we are reinforcing our model within the confines of the new organic standards. The integration of more farms into our network prioritizes outdoor space, aligning seamlessly with our long-standing advocacy for increased hen access to pastures.

We're actively centralizing certifications through the Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) for new producers, streamlining the transition to organic practices. Our strategic focus over the next few years involves expanding outdoor access for hens as our network grows.





# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## A Focus On Feed

Our journey towards sustainability extends beyond our network of dedicated small farms. In 2023, we embarked on an innovative initiative with our partner company, HBF Grain to source feed ingredients directly from grain producers, affording us greater control over our supply chain. By actively brokering grain sourcing, we've transformed how we acquire essential ingredients like corn and soy. This approach empowers us to directly negotiate and deliver specific quantities of grain to mills, bypassing intermediaries and reducing transportation, thereby enhancing efficiency and minimizing environmental impact.

By forging direct connections with grain farmers, we ensure the highest quality feed for our hens, and foster transparency and healthier practices throughout our supply chain. With this initiative, we are exploring ways to reduce waste, transportation, and enhance the quality of our feed to ensure healthier hens.



# 2023 COST SHARE

## Advancing Sustainability Through On-Farm Projects

The continuation of our Cost-Share program, as well as participation in USDA grants have been instrumental in driving our efforts towards sustainability.

### Collaborations with Local Technicians



The 2023 Cost-Share program comprised various projects, including a tree-planting pilot in collaboration with Wellspring Forest Farm. Through this pilot, HBF growers in New York collaborated with HBF's Director of Sustainability and Communications and Wellspring Forest Farm to plant trees on their pasture with the ultimate goals of designing resilient hen habitats and contributing to the enhancement of local ecosystems.

We also began a cover cropping pilot program. Our Pasture Management Planner developed a cover crop mix with a local seed distributor and collaborated with more than 25 farms in Kentucky. This widespread adoption of addressing high-traffic areas through cover cropping represents a significant step towards regenerative land management.



# INNOVATIONS IN AGRICULTURE

## Research and Development Through Regenerative Egg Farming Project

We are proud to enter into the second year of our USDA Regenerative Egg Farming Project grant, which launched in 2022. Through this grant, our focus has been to understand the benefits of tree planting, cover cropping, water management, and livestock integration on layer hen farms. Our ongoing progress involves mapping out this relationship through soil and emissions data, highlighting the intricate connections between carbon cycling and the role of chickens within our agricultural framework.



### Data Collection and Monitoring

We're working with the University of Kentucky and to develop a comprehensive data collection strategy that monitors the effectiveness of our initiatives through sampling the soil, the air, and the insects present on participating farms.

Baseline samples have yielded insights about how we can improve the soil structure, air quality, and management practices on pasture-raised hen farms. On the pasture, we found biodiverse insect communities across the farms participating in the grant.

# BIODIVERSITY

## PLANT-DWELLING ARTHROPODS

We have collected 13,665 plant-dwelling arthropods from foliage on our pastures!

## POLLINATORS

We have collected a total of 305 bees!

## GROUND-DWELLING ARTHROPODS

To date, we have collected 17,075 ground-dwelling arthropods. Of these, 8,011 were ants!

## SOIL HEALTH

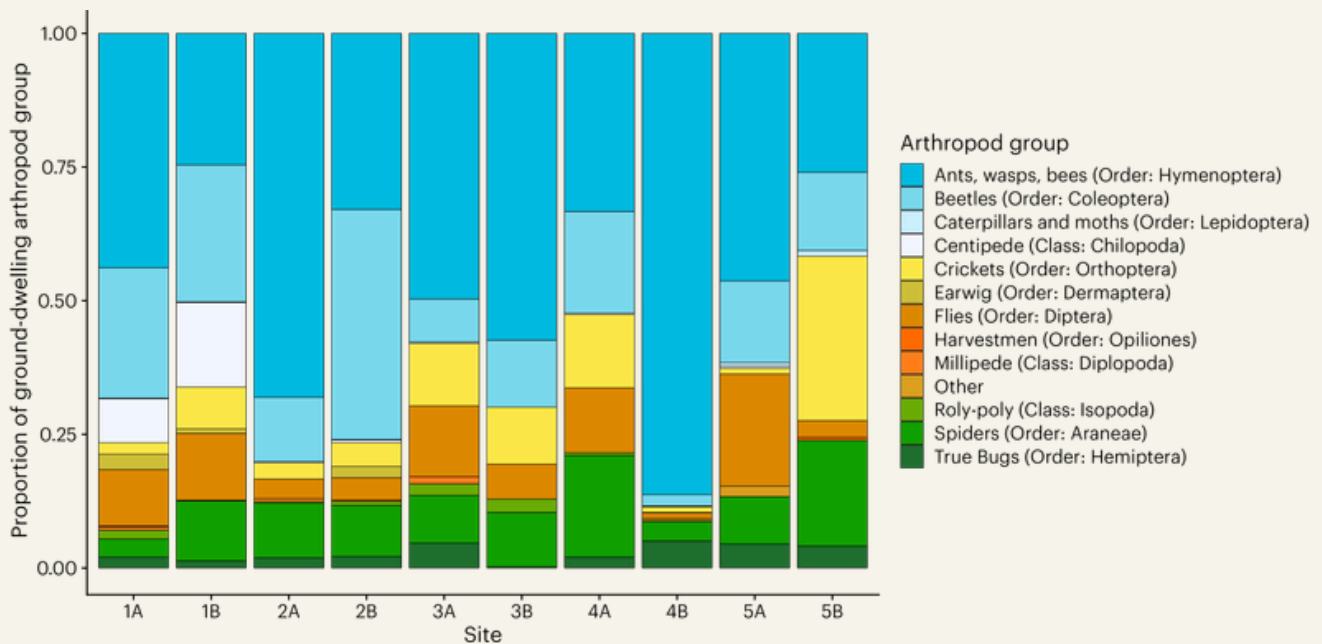
To track important soil health metrics such as soil organic matter and soil organic carbon, we have collected 86 soil samples.

# PROMOTING POLLINATORS

As part of the Regenerative Egg Farming Project (REFP), we are collaborating with the University of Kentucky (UKY) to assess the biodiversity of pollinator communities on ten HBF research farms in Kentucky. We recognize the crucial role that pollinators play in global food production. With over 85 percent of the world's flowering plants, including two-thirds of the world's crops, relying on pollinators, their preservation is essential. In the face of challenges such as habitat loss due to pesticide use, lack of biodiversity, and climate change-driven extreme weather patterns, we are committed to understanding and enhancing the impact of our pasture-raised hen model on pollinator habitats.

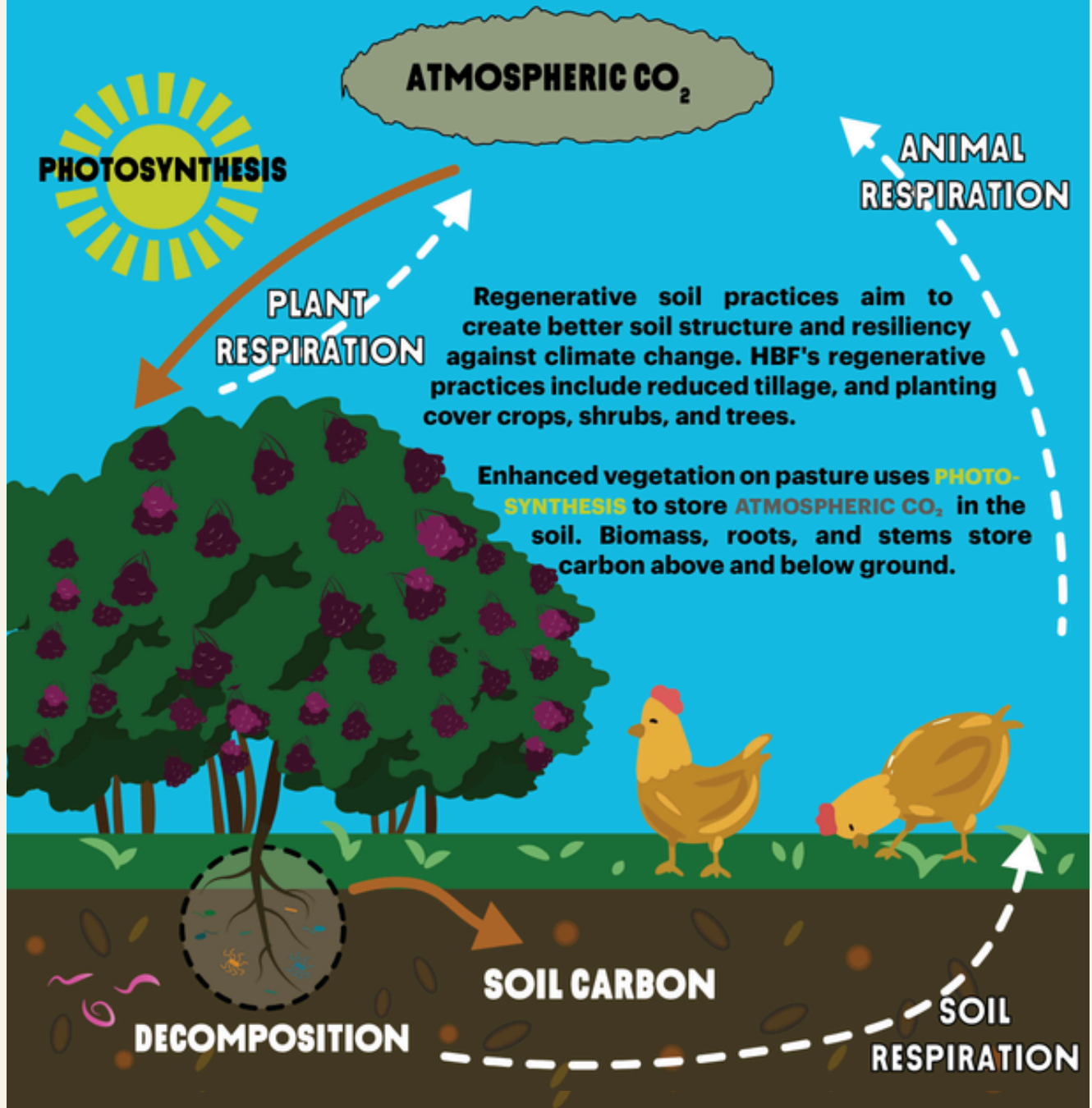
On participating farms, two main pollinator survey methods – vane traps and pan traps – are employed to identify and study the pollinator populations on each farm. Vane traps, designed to simulate pollinator habitats, attract flying pollinators, primarily bees, using blue and yellow tube-like structures with soapy water. Pan traps, placed on the ground, sample the abundance and diversity of pollinators using white, yellow, and blue dishes.

Through these methods, HBF’s Climate-Smart Science Coordinator identified that truebugs, flies, beetles, and bees were the most prevalent pollinators across all ten research farms.



As the research farms embrace more regenerative practices over the course of the four-year grant, the UKY team hypothesizes that all pollinator groups will witness an increase in abundance and biodiversity. We remain dedicated to regenerative farming practices and seek to better understand the intricate relationships between our pasture-raised hens, pollinators, and the overall ecosystem.

# CARBON CYCLING IN PASTURED-POULTRY SYSTEMS



---

# IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH

On the participating farms for the Regenerative Egg Farming Project, Handsome Brook Farms conducted soil sampling to assess soil health and identify areas for improvement. The analysis, carried out by Regen Ag Labs and Soil Carbon Initiative, focuses on key measures like Soil Respiration CO<sub>2</sub>-C, %MAC (Microbially Active Carbon), and Organic Carbon levels. We learned that soil health varies in both forested and nonforested areas, highlighting the need for unique improvements on each farm.

Soil Respiration, which tells us about the soil's biological activity, varied in different spots and depths. The labs emphasized the importance of managing erosion to manage soil respiration. Microbially Active Carbon (%MAC), which indicates how much organic carbon is being used, showed differences between areas with and without trees. This highlighted the importance of balanced carbon management, like planting trees and shrubs strategically to allow for photosynthesis to occur. In some cases, farm plans included clearing old trees to enable enough sun to shine through onto the pasture.

The lab results also measured macronutrients like Nitrogen and Phosphorus, and a Soil Health Calculation gave an overall score for soil health, aiming to improve from the baseline.

The soil analyses provided a good baseline look at the current health of the soil. Handsome Brook Farms now plans to boost soil health by using strategies such as managing carbon sequestration by planting cover crops, and woody vegetation in some areas and controlling erosion in others.

While each farm is implementing unique strategies tailored to their specific needs, a common practice among all farms involved the planting of cover crops on eroded areas, serving as a protective measure against soil degradation. Additionally, some farms opted for more extensive measures by planting trees, shrubs, and other woody vegetation to enhance carbon sequestration. These approaches not only contribute to carbon storage but also promote biodiversity. Another innovative approach will involve the introduction of livestock into crop rotation, aiming to boost soil microbiome communities.

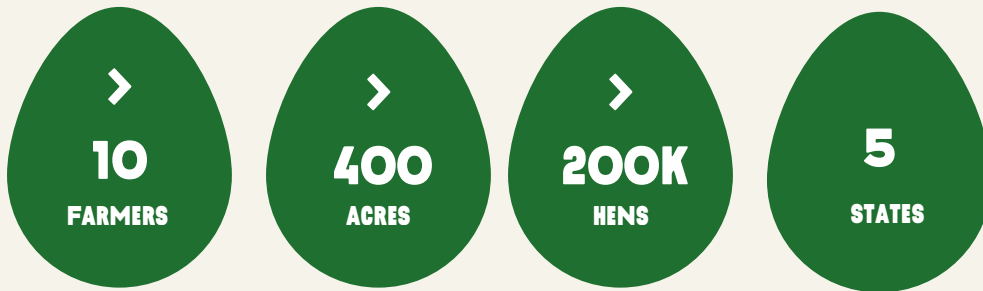
By implementing a mix of strategies, the farms are actively working towards sustainable and diversified approaches for a healthier soil ecosystem.

# CLIMATE SMART ORGANIC EGG PROJECT

## Project Expansion and Impact

The Climate Smart Organic Egg Project launched in August 2023, with the support of a \$3.6 million USDA grant over 5 years and HBF's investment of \$2.8 million in matching funds. In collaboration with partners like Costco Wholesale, NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business, and others, the project aims to revolutionize sustainable agriculture in organic egg production. The initiative includes the development of a "Soil and Climate Health" label, offering consumers transparency and assurance of our climate-conscious practices. The project encompasses diverse climate-smart initiatives on partner farms, such as solar energy installations, energy-efficient lighting, and pasture enhancements.

### Year 1 Milestones:

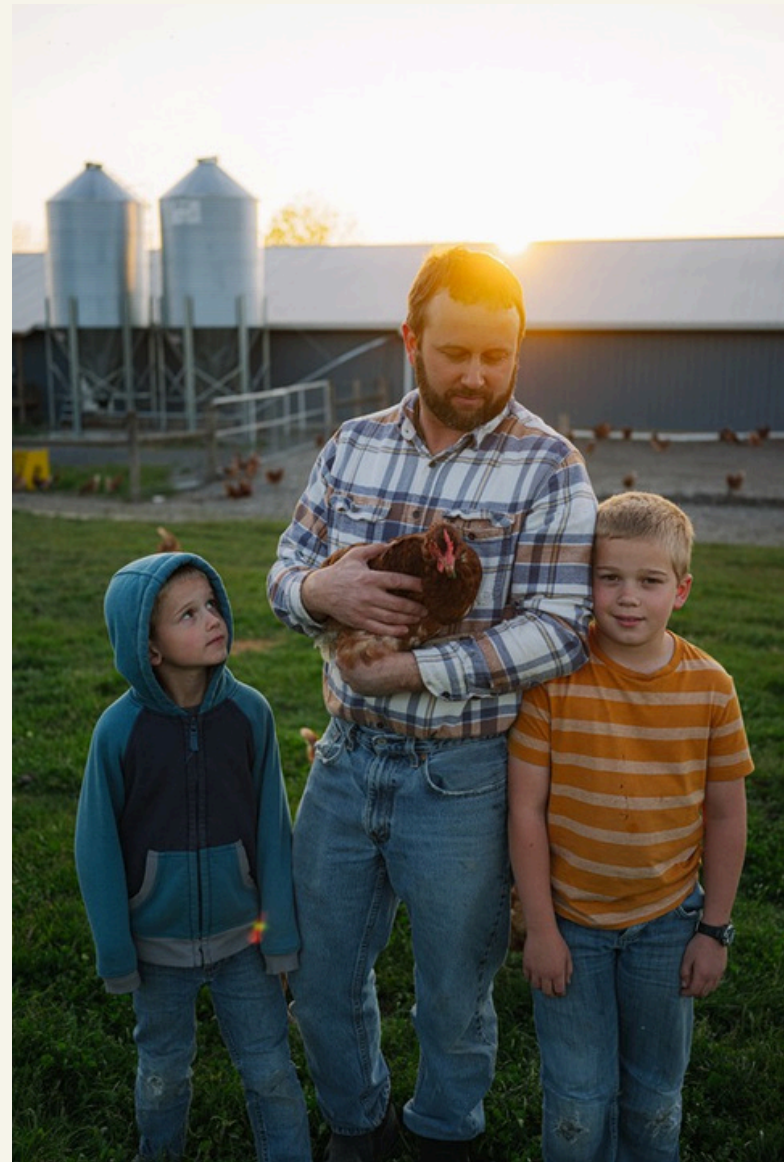


Stay tuned for updates on the project's progress through Handsome Brook Farms' communication channels.

### Grant Participation and Objectives

The diverse portfolio of grants we've engaged with highlight our commitment to multifaceted sustainability. Each grant has its unique objectives and partners, collectively contributing to our mission of promoting regenerative, climate-smart farming practices across 100% of the farms in our network.





# STRATEGIC SOURCING

## Supporting Local Communities

We take immense pride in collaborations with like-minded businesses. Through these partnerships, we've not only secured local seeds but also sourced trees and shrubs from neighboring farmers. Our dedication to supporting nearby businesses extends to our procurement policies, prioritizing local sourcing whenever feasible.

## Evergreen Partnerships

In the idyllic Finger Lakes region, two Handsome Brook Farms growers, Laurence and Luke, embarked on a collaborative tree-planting project that was mutually beneficial. Laurence, with his horticultural expertise and small organic nursery, provided Thuja Green Giant evergreen trees to Luke. The trees were planted around Luke's chicken barn, envisioning a windbreak that would protect the barn from the region's relentless winds. As seasons pass, the Thuja Green Giants, in addition to a strategic selection of other hardwood trees, will flourish into a protective shield around Luke's barn.

The project's success will not only enhance the landscape but also provide shelter for the hens, reduce emissions, and highlight the enduring spirit of cooperation between neighbors, providing opportunities for other regional farmers to source trees locally.



# STRATEGIC SOURCING

## Elderberry Solutions



Handsome Brook Farms' earliest adopters to implement regenerative agriculture practices wanted to add shade to their pasture to lure their hens further from their barns but were wary about planting trees. They were concerned that tall trees would draw predators - like hawks - closer to their barns and endanger their hens. Elderberries are short in stature, which means they tend to deter flying predators like hawks. They are one of the easiest plants to propagate and maintain once established, making them ideal for HBF growers who are busy tending their hens.

In addition to transplanting cuttings from existing elderberry plants, Handsome Brook Farms sources from responsible elderberry nurseries including Elder Farms and Buhler Organics in Missouri. Both nurseries have been cultivating many varieties of the American Elderberry for 10 years and are becoming leading producers and advocates for the prosperity of the American Elderberry.



"There's no better fertilizer for Elderberries than chicken litter," says Dave Buhler of Elder Farms in Mount Vernon, Missouri.

# FARMER SNAPSHOTS



## LUKE NOLT, NY

At 22, Luke began his first flock of 20,000 hens with Handsome Brook Farms in NY. Now, 26 and a new father, Luke is focused on enhancing his hen's health, nurturing his land, and laying the groundwork for a sustainable farming legacy for his son. Luke recently collaborated with local agroecologist, Steve Gabriel, to implement agroforestry techniques on his chicken pasture. The native tree plantings are addressing wind exposure and creating shelter for his hens. Over the next few decades, the trees will continue to grow and create a windbreak, increasing the resiliency of Luke's farm.



## DAVID HOOVER, KY

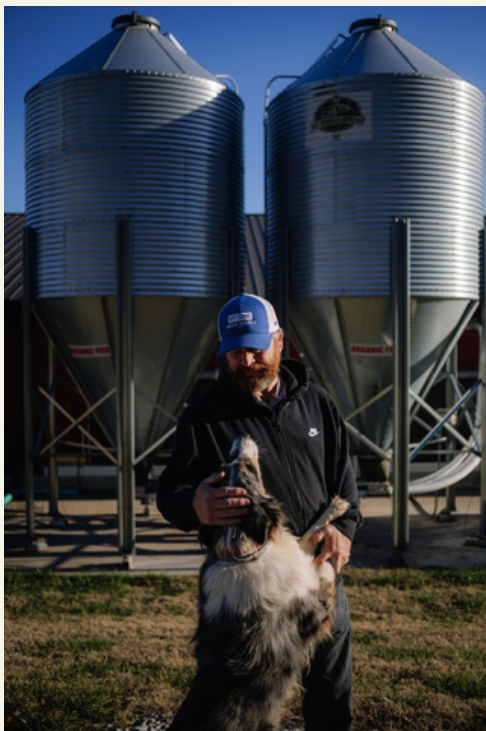
David's organic farming journey began on his family's Kentucky farm. Transitioning from conventional agriculture, he faced challenges in labor-intensive organic practices but found resilience in the growing organic market. Despite occasional setbacks with his organic crop production like insect infestations, he witnessed tangible improvements in soil health, attributing this to the shift away from conventional chemicals. His farm is contributing to his community through expanding regional supply chains. David sells his organic crops directly to the local feed mill, which supports his hens.

# FARMER SNAPSHOTS



## JASON MARTIN, NY

Jason has seen the dairy industry diminish over generations, struggling to sustain a small herd amid volatile milk prices. Seeking stability, he diversified his farm with cash crops, but market downturns left him financially strained. In 2016, a tract of land near his homestead sparked hope—a prospect for a chicken barn. Jason seized the chance, venturing into raising hens for Handsome Brook Farms. The shift offered better pay and stability compared to dairy farming. Despite the challenges of acclimating new hens to their environment, Jason's commitment to sustainable farming shines through. He has converted 45 conventional acres into organic through persistent land management. Recently welcoming his third child, Jason carries on his family's farming tradition in the same house where he was born.



## DAVE ZIMMERMAN, KY

Dave and his wife Rhoda moved to Kentucky in 2002 looking for a home and place to call their own. They always had the ambition to farm, but worked jobs off the farm to pay their bills. Raising hens for Handsome Brook Farms has given them a way to pursue their dream of farming, on mining land which others deemed worthless. After being diagnosed with a tick-borne illness, which caused an allergic reaction to red meat, Dave found relief in eating organic, whole foods. A drastic change to the family's diet, as a result, motivates their farming today. Dave and his family are deeply motivated to provide others with healthy, organic food.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**HBF is continuing to invest in communities across the country**

## Quarterly Donations

We continue to support mission-aligned organizations through a cash donation program. Once per quarter, HBF donates \$2500 to Soul Fire Farm in New York and Sharing Our Roots in Minnesota, totaling \$20,000 for the year.



**SHARING  
OUR ROOTS**

## Regenerative Agriculture Scholarship

HBF is proud to continue its Regenerative Agriculture Scholarship through the University of Kentucky National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS). This year, HBF sponsored a first-generation student from Union KY, majoring in Animal Science.



**MANRRS**



**University of  
Kentucky**

## Egg and Meal Donations

In 2023, we donated a total of 47,340 dozen eggs to the Georgia Mountain Food Bank. Through our partnership with Rethink Food, we've donated more than 15,000 pounds of eggs creating over 12,000 meals for NYC residents facing food insecurity.



## Fundraising

Through our Upcycling Nutritious Food Panel Event in NYC, we raised over \$1500 in ticket sales, which were donated to One Love Community Fridge and Rethink Food.



# FEEDING COMMUNITIES

## Grower Gatherings and Policy Advocacy

Our engagement with our farm network includes collaboration and learning opportunities. Through Grower Gatherings, we've fostered a culture of knowledge sharing and camaraderie among farmers.

Entering our second year of participation in the Regenerate America Coalition, we've been supportive of policy discussions that advocate for promoting regenerative agriculture and supporting local food systems in the Farm Bill.



## Initiatives for Food Security and Access

We've actively participated in initiatives that address the critical issue of food insecurity. Our Upcycling Nutritious Food Event and Panel in the summer fostered practical solutions to reduce food waste in New York City.

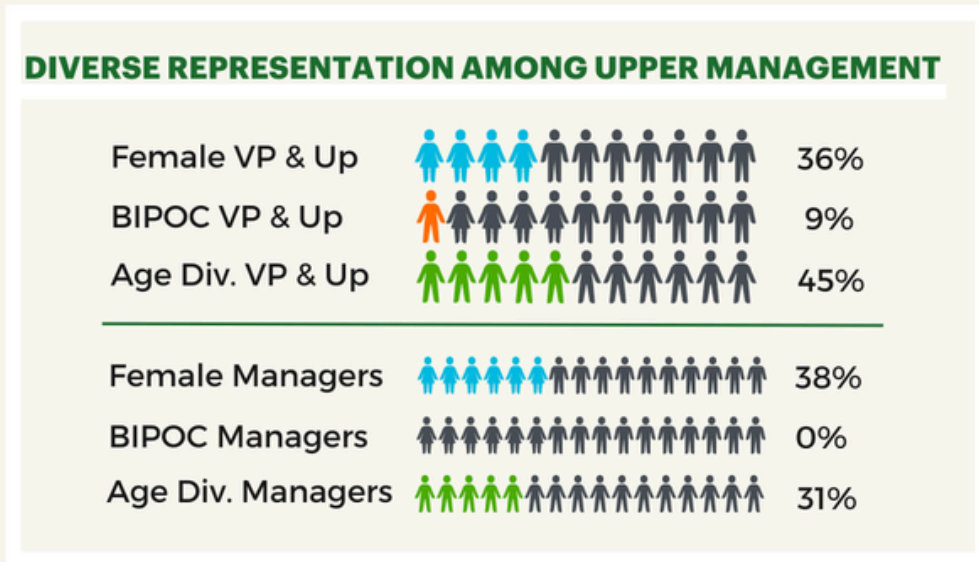
Partnerships with Rethink Food and One Love Community Fridge have enabled us to donate eggs to food-insecure New Yorkers, contributing to more than 12,000 meals and supporting those in need. The meals provided through these efforts underscore our commitment to addressing food insecurity head-on.



# EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

## Our Evolving Workforce Dynamics

This year we added 11 new team members, 8 of whom assumed newly created roles, bringing fresh perspectives and skills to our organization. In our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we proudly report that 51% of our workforce comprises talented women, and we have successfully appointed two female executives, contributing to 36% representation in upper management.



BIPOC employment represented 11% of our workforce in 2023.

Our commitment to age diversity remains steadfast, with a consistent representation of 29% in our workforce, showcasing our dedication to fostering an inclusive environment for employees of all age groups.

As we reflect on these statistics, we look forward to furthering our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the coming years.

## 2023 DIVERSITY

BIPOC (5)



Female/Male Ratio



Under age 24 (2), Over age 50 (11)





---

# CHARTING THE PATH TO PROGRESS

As we reflect on our journey and the strides made toward sustainability, Handsome Brook Farms stands poised at the threshold of a future filled with opportunity. Our gaze is fixed on ambitious sustainability goals for 2027, guiding our path towards a more socially and environmentally conscious future.

In the coming year, we anticipate a series of initiatives aligned with these sustainability aspirations, including refining our strategies to communicate climate-smart egg production. This endeavor will not only enhance our communication but also strengthen our commitment to transparency and conscientious practices.

At the heart of our vision lies an unwavering commitment to ongoing improvement. We acknowledge the ever-evolving sustainability landscape and remain steadfast in our pursuit of positive change.



# **SMALL FARMS, BIG HEARTS, BRIGHTER FUTURE**

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our stakeholders, partners, and customers whose support has been instrumental in propelling us forward. It's your belief in our mission that fuels our dedication to sustainability.

Handsome Brook Farms remains dedicated to making a difference—one egg, one initiative, and one step at a time.

Thank you for being part of our mission to create a more handsome world.



[handsomebrookfarms.com](https://handsomebrookfarms.com)

2023 Handsome Brook Farms, LLC.  
All Rights Reserved