

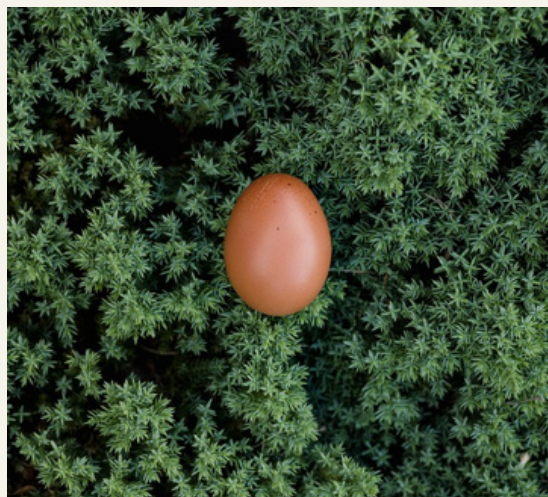


# HANDSOME BROOK FARMS



## IMPACT REPORT

2021



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# INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CEO

## SMALL FARMS, BIG HEARTS, BRIGHTER FUTURE

At Handsome Brook Farms, we strive to "Act Handsomely": that means working hard to ensure personal, public, and planetary health are prioritized at every turn. We treat our farmers and animals with dignity and the land with respect, while helping consumers access clean, responsibly raised protein.

Despite the many unique challenges we faced, 2021 was a year of growth and development for Handsome Brook Farms. We realigned our business model, strengthened our mission, developed sustainability pillars, and achieved B Corp status.

Now more than ever, it is our responsibility to act on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to mitigate climate change. As an agriculture business, we understand our potential to have a positive impact on climate change. That's why our mission and sustainability pillars are focused on reducing our carbon footprint.

We have always been 100% pasture raised, and 2021 was the year, through the hard work of our Compliance and Live Operations teams, we transitioned to become 100% USDA Certified Organic. We are addressing environmental challenges for the layer hen industry by encouraging farmers in our network to adopt regenerative agriculture practices. Launched in April 2021, our Farmer Cost-Share Program addresses the UN SDGs by improving pasture conditions, water quality, and animal welfare, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

By 2027, we aim to advance regenerative agriculture practices across 100% of farms in our network, increase the sustainability of our packaging, and reduce Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions by 10% across our supply chain.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed social injustices everywhere, including, and especially, in the food system. In response to those injustices in 2021, we developed a Social Justice Agenda and supported BIPOC-led nonprofit organizations dismantling systemic injustice in the food system.

In November 2021, we were awarded a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) for our Regenerative Egg Farming Project (REFP) proposal. Our goal through this project is to demonstrate that regenerative practices substantially reduce on-farm GHG emissions, increase local ecosystem biodiversity, reduce on-farm soil erosion and watershed pollution, and ultimately save pasture-raised poultry producers' money through improved bird health outcomes.

We take great pride in the significant progress we've made across each of our sustainability pillars through the myriad projects and initiatives launched in 2021. We continue to build on the momentum established and appreciate the support of all our stakeholders, without whom Handsome Brook Farms would not be possible.

Our future initiatives will focus on decreasing our ecological impact through continued prioritization of regenerative initiatives, acting on systemic injustice in the food system, and contributing to global sustainability efforts. By acting handsomely at every level of our organization we will continue to demonstrate that better food is, in fact, better business.



Jordan Czeizler  
Chief Executive Officer





# MISSION & SUSTAINABILITY PILLARS

**Handsome Brook Farms' mission is to produce and deliver the most sustainable eggs possible, from our coops to consumers' cartons.**

What are 'Sustainable' eggs? Eggs from a production system that supports: the highest level of animal welfare, conservation, regeneration of the earth's natural resources, and thriving communities and farm economies. We have identified 3 primary Sustainability Pillars and aligned them with 7 of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



## 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



**Certified**



®



**Corporation**



## **Handsome Brook Farms became B Corp™ certified in 2021**

B Corp™ is a certification program designed to independently verify that a given business meets “the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability”, built on the concept that businesses must be a force for good.

The B-Impact Assessment required us to look at how our company makes decisions, how those decisions impact our stakeholders, and equally identified the areas where we excel and need to be more thoughtful. Going through the assessment process gave us a comprehensive snapshot of how we were currently doing compared to our peers and paved a pathway for meaningful company-wide improvements.

Based on our initial results, we've strengthened our mission, created the aforementioned sustainability pillars, and defined a roadmap for amplifying our environmental and social impact.

As a company comprised of a diverse network of independent farmers, we determined that the most direct way to have meaningful environmental and social impact was to invest in our farmers. We did this in 2021 by launching a groundbreaking cost-share program that allowed our farmers to identify what infrastructure improvements would best serve their farms and flock.

Internally, we have also bolstered our commitment to social justice in the agricultural space and streamlined our financial commitments to local and mission-aligned philanthropies.

The following pages will take you through the strides we made in 2021.



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# COST-SHARE PROJECTS

223 individual projects were completed with 62 Handsome Brook Farmers in the 2021 Farmer Cost-Share Program. Here's a closer look at how the projects addressed HBF's Sustainability Goals.

## **Water/Nutrient Management**

Water Quality/Nutrient Management projects focused on controlling stormwater and improving water quality in the chicken pasture and beyond. These projects included building or restoring manure sheds to reduce nutrient leaching into public waterways and installing gutter systems on barns to prevent soil erosion caused by standing water.

## **Pasture Improvement**

Pasture Improvement projects focused on increasing soil health and regenerating pasture. These projects included: implementing rotational grazing to allow for vegetative rest and recovery; re-seeding the chicken pasture to increase vegetative cover; and planting trees and shrubs to sequester carbon in the soil, leading to long-term land regeneration and additional enterprise opportunities for farmers.

## **Animal Welfare**

Animal Welfare projects focused on enhancing the lives of the hens and farmers in HBF's network. These projects included building shade structures to provide protection for hens in the pasture and drawing them away from heavy traffic areas around the barn. Some farmers also included incorporating frost-resistant water sources for their hens under the shade structures.

## **GHG Reduction**

Greenhouse Gas Reduction projects helped move the needle on HBF's goal to reduce Scope 3 GHG emissions by 10% across the supply chain by 2030. The projects focused on increasing the barn's solar energy capacity for farmers with existing solar panels. In the future, we will be exploring GHG reduction options such as fully transitioning barn energy to solar power.

# BY THE NUMBERS



**2,805**

trees & shrubs planted

**35**

Acres re-seeded



**84**

shade structures built



**24**

gutter systems installed





**11**

Farmers implemented rotational grazing



**2**

Farmers added solar panels to power their barns

**8**

Manure management structures built



**62**

Farm families supported





# REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Regenerative Agriculture refers to farming and grazing practices that focus on restoration. These efforts build soil health, increase biodiversity, and reduce agriculture runoff. We are thoughtfully adopting practices and principles with our partner farmers in order to leave our land, waters, and climate in better shape for future generations. Here are a few of the many initiatives our Corporate Responsibility Team is leading to advance regenerative practices.

## Nutrient Management Planning:

Poultry manure is one of the best natural and organic fertilizers available. It is high in nitrogen and has lower levels of other important crop nutrients like phosphorus and potassium. But proper use and application rates are critical. With guidance from Nutrient Management Planners in Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and New York, HBF has rolled out our own Nutrient Management Policy to help guide our farmers on how to store and utilize the byproduct of raising hens in an environmentally conscious way.

## Cover Cropping:

At the beginning of 2021, HBF partnered with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) of New York and a local, organic seed supplier to trial planting organic sorghum-sudangrass around 4 barns in the Handsome Brook network. The SWCD suggested planting sorghum-sudangrass because it is a broadleaf grass that creates shade for the hens while removing excess phosphorus from the soil. The trial demonstrated the importance of collaboration with local technicians and led to a determination to learn more about the interconnections of soil health, hen health, and farmer health.

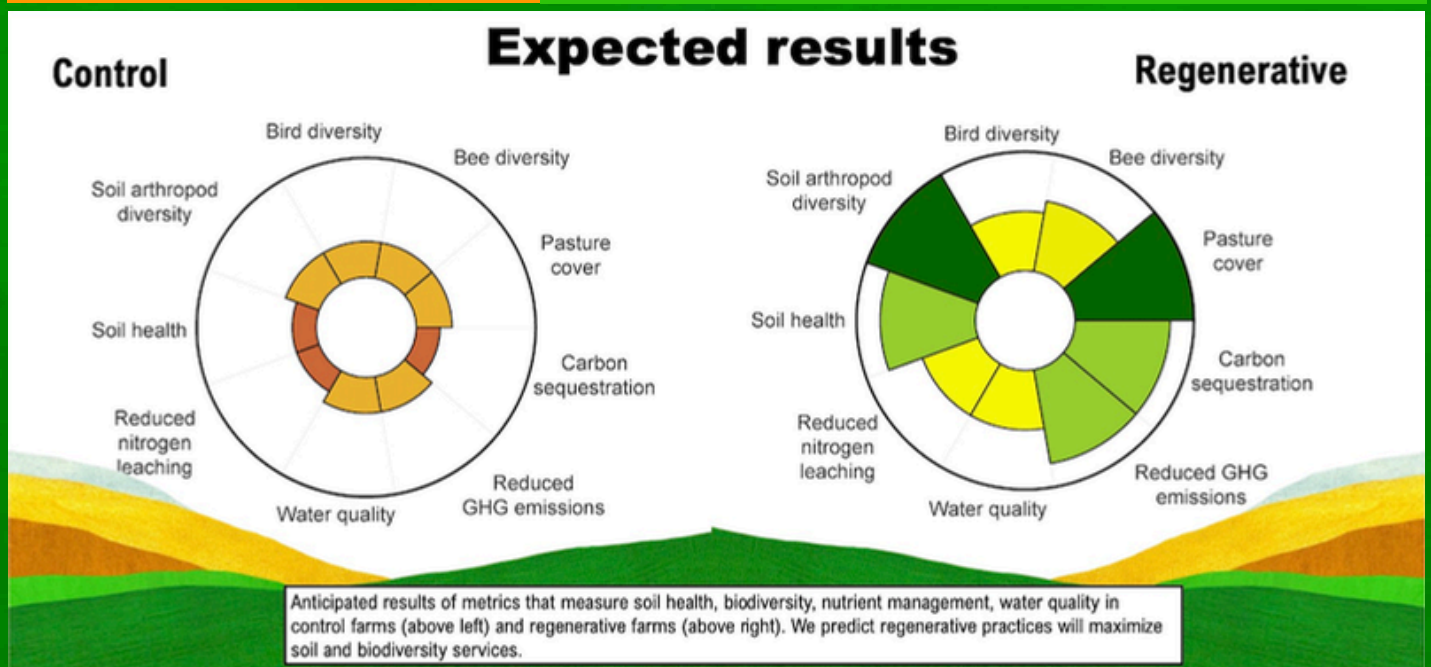
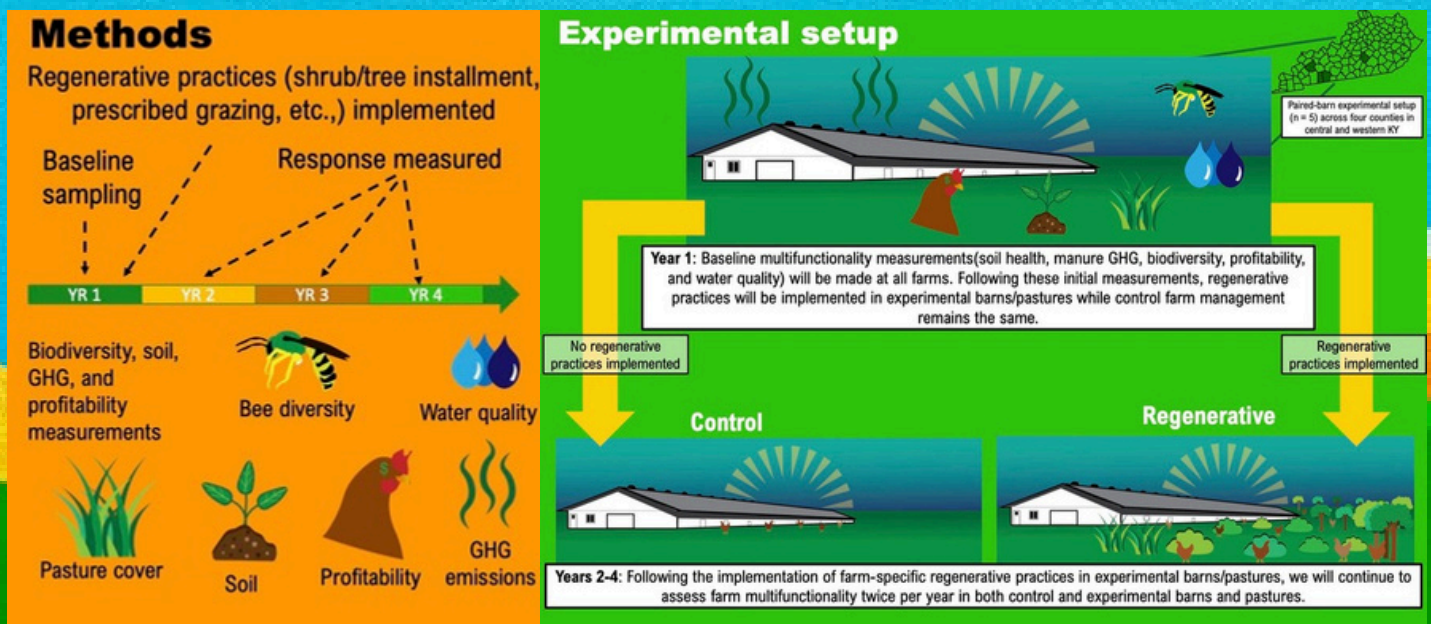
## Further Research and Collaboration:

In November 2021, we were awarded a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) for our proposal the Regenerative Egg Farming Project (REFP). Starting in 2022 and over a 4 year period, 5 HBF farmers in Kentucky will adopt regenerative practices that have traditionally been seen as cost-prohibitive for them, including tree and shrub establishment in the pasture, cross-fencing for exclusion zones and more robust rotational grazing strategies, and the construction of manure/compost storage structures. These on-farm trials build off of the work HBF has been and continues to finance through our cost-share program, but allows us to start measuring the social and environmental impact of our efforts through a limited pilot program.



# REGENERATIVE EGG FARMING PROJECT (REFP)

Our goal through this project is to determine how the adoption and implementation of regenerative farming practices impact soil health, biodiversity, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water quality, bird health outcomes, and ultimately farmer profitability.



Graphics Developed by Dr. Karina Garcia; Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Scholar with the University of Kentucky



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# SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

In 2020, HBF staff participated in Soul Fire Farm's Uprooting Racism in the Food System Workshop. During the workshop, staff learned about the history of racial oppression in the food system, reflected on privilege and bias, and completed an equity rubric to assess HBF's role in dismantling racism in the food system.

Following the workshop, a Social Justice Action Plan was created for 2021.

## **The Social Justice Plan for 2021 included:**

- **Increasing Farmer participation in operations.**
- **Working in solidarity with BIPOC-led farming organizations.**
- **Promoting and amplifying the work of BIPOC farmers.**

Internally, HBF created and implemented a Hiring for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) policy to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workspace. As a direct result of implementing the policy, BIPOC employment at HBF's HQ increased from 5% to 10% in 2021.

HBF Staff also met monthly for Social Justice Conversations, which centered around injustices in the food system and included topics such as food apartheid, indigenous foodways, investing in regenerative agriculture to achieve food sovereignty, migrant labor in the USA, heirs property laws, and more.

While we are proud of the work we've accomplished in 2021, we acknowledge there is a lot more work to be done, and a lot more to learn. We've been enriched by the work being done by the BIPOC-led farming organizations we supported in 2021 (read more about their work on the next page) and hope that 2022 is filled with more opportunities to engage with organizations fighting to end injustices in the food system.

Our future goals include increasing opportunities for staff to participate in volunteer field days on BIPOC-led farms and continuing to learn about how we can fight injustices in the food system through individual and collective action.

# PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTIONS

We believe we have a social responsibility to support nonprofit organizations in the communities we operate in through in-kind contributions, and to fiscally contribute to organizations whose missions align with our own. HBF's Philanthropic and Community Investment Policy and Procedure is reviewed and adjusted annually based on the previous year's performance and impact. As we grow, our philanthropic contributions will too. HBF's philanthropic community investment strategy for 2021 was to contribute through:

## **In-Kind (Egg) Donations**

HBF donated a total of \$126,645 in egg donations to food banks in Georgia, Arkansas, New Jersey, and New York.

## **On-Farm Improvement Investments**

HBF put a significant amount of funds towards our farmer Cost-Share Program. Participants also contributed with their own funds and labor. See pages 11-13.

## **Employee Match Program**

In May, we expanded our corporate match program by matching employee donations made to eligible 501(c)3 organizations whose purpose and philosophy are consistent with Handsome Brook's Animal Welfare and Sustainability objectives. Through the Employee Match Program, HBF donated to 6 different NGOs across the USA that are important to our employees.

## **Handsome Brook Farm's 2022 Regenerative Agriculture Scholarship**

HBF partnered with the University of Kentucky Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Chapter to launch the HBF Regenerative Agriculture Scholarship. The \$5000 scholarship will fund up to two students seeking a career in regenerative agriculture in the 2022 school year.

## **Quarterly Donations to 3 Mission-Aligned NGOs**

HBF formalized a cash donation program in 2021. Once per quarter, HBF made a donation of \$1,750 to 3 mission-aligned organizations totaling \$21,000 for the year. Read more about how the organizations allocated their funding:

### **SOUL FIRE FARM**

HBF supported Soul Fire Farm's programs which reach over 10,000 people each year including farmer training for BIPOC growers, reparations and land return initiatives for northeast farmers, food justice workshops for urban youth, home gardens for city-dwellers living under food apartheid, doorstep harvest delivery for food-insecure households, and systems and policy education for public decision-makers.

### **SHARING OUR ROOTS**

Our donation to Sharing Our Roots, a 100-acre educational and regenerative agriculture farm and nonprofit located in Minnesota, helped support emerging and immigrant farmers. In addition to gaining free-range chicken farming skills, the farmers learn how to create a biodiverse system of symbiotically connected livestock and organically grown perennials.

### **BLACK SOIL**

Black Soil's vision is to help foster a greater market share for Black farmers and producers as they provide healthy food options to a larger consumer base. Our contribution helped provide food to 680 families through ONE Lexington, as well as providing 360 families with food and crafts through the Lyric Theater and Cultural Arts Center in Lexington KY.



**THE ~~END~~  
BEGINNING**



**HANDSOME  
BROOK FARMS**

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