



endure[®]

A GROWMARK System Sustainability Initiative



GROWMARK

HELPING TO FEED AND FUEL THE WORLD

GROWMARK is an agricultural cooperative serving cooperatives, retailers, businesses, and customers in the U.S. and Canada. We provide customers with fuels, lubricants, crop nutrients, crop protection products, seed, construction services, equipment, and grain marketing assistance. In addition, GROWMARK provides a host of services from warehousing and logistics to training and marketing support.

Understanding the role we play in helping make agriculture more sustainable drives us to implement activities that support research and fund innovation. GROWMARK also practices sustainable activities diligently with the internal drive to make them profitable, successful, and meaningful to help ensure we can continue to help feed and fuel the world far into the future.

Endure is the story of how GROWMARK and the FS System work toward more effective environmental measures, meaningful social interactions, and sound governance each year.

DEVELOPING LEADERS

THROUGHOUT THE GROWMARK SYSTEM

DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE



GROWMARK CEO Mark Orr leads a panel at the Cooperative Leadership Conference with Carroll Service Company GM, Chase Sellnow, Prairieland FS CEO, Keith Hufendick, and Evergreen FS CEO, John Tuttle

EMPLOYEES

All GROWMARK employees are required to take part in a variety of training that covers ethical behavior in the workplace, security information, privacy protection, recognizing harassment, and code of conduct training. New courses are added each year that address the needs of employees. Some of the new offerings in 2024 include mental health awareness, dignity and respect in the global workplace, and data protection. The GROWMARK System University also introduced Percipio Online Training in 2023, an immersive online learning platform, to provide on-demand learning opportunities for employees.



Aligning with one of the cooperative principles of education, training, and information, we emphasize the importance of ongoing training for GROWMARK's employees, executive leadership, and board of directors. A three-tier system ensures the future of strong cooperatives and reinforces that best practices are being followed throughout the System. Personnel from throughout the System are encouraged to take advantage of education and training to help them effectively contribute to their cooperatives' development.

LEADERS

The GROWMARK leadership development pipeline is critical to help us prepare leaders to manage the needs of the organization in the future.

To achieve this, we offer four levels of development starting with aspiring leaders who want to learn more about the System and what it takes to be a leader, followed by supervisor training, experienced leaders training, and the capstone of our leadership training, the senior leadership development program. This program cultivates professionals from throughout the System to build relationships, dive deep into core issues, challenge assumptions, and gain greater clarity and understanding of how to lead an organization today and in the future.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All directors are required to participate in GROWMARK Director Training. The training equips board members with the knowledge and skills to drive profitability and strengthen connections within our cooperative System. Participants deepen their understanding of governance principles, enhance leadership skills, and foster a culture of accountability. Director training is provided at three levels: level one Director Certification, level two Professional Director Certification, and level three Master Director Certification.



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The GROWMARK System helps to feed and fuel the world which provides a unique opportunity to help support, educate, and implement smart stewardship practices on the farm and within the agricultural supply chain.



Partnering to Protect Watersheds

The GROWMARK System operates over many watersheds throughout the United States. We take protecting water quality seriously and demonstrate this through our commitment to 4R Nutrient Stewardship. Here are some of the ways we engage in collaborative efforts to protect these watersheds.



Within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, GROWMARK supports the Pennsylvania and Delaware-Maryland 4R Alliances which administer the 4R Split Nitrogen cost share program and has achieved overall implementation on 5,923 acres in 2023.



Ten FS member companies have partnered with the Illinois Farm Bureau through their grant programs to help with outreach and adoption of practices in various watersheds.



FS members participate in N-rate trials in local watersheds.



GROWMARK worked with the Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a collaborative training plan to better serve our mutual customers, impacting watersheds in the north-central and northeastern part of Iowa.



The GROWMARK System supports work in the Western and Central Lake Erie Basin in Ohio, where the Legacy Farmers Cooperative enrolled 127 nutrient management plans covering over 85,000 acres in H2Ohio contracts ending in crop year 2023. For the second phase of contracts in its initial rollout, the Legacy Famer Cooperative has already enrolled 131 plans covering over 88,000 acres.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Supporting Certified Crop Specialists

We're proud to have more than 200 certified crop specialists working within the GROWMARK System. This program ensures crop specialists have a high degree of expertise to best advise their farmer customers on the latest sustainability and conservation techniques. To become certified, applicants must pass two exams through the Certified Crop Advisor program on a variety of topics including but not limited to, nutrient management, nitrogen management, precision agriculture, sustainability, and agronomy. We encourage agronomists and crop specialists throughout the GROWMARK System to work toward their certifications.



We're especially proud that the Illinois Certified Crop Advisor of the Year in 2023 was Brandon Hall, an employee with West Central FS who is passionate about soil science and protecting our natural resources. **Click on the QR code to the left** to read more about how Brandon works with farmers to implement sustainable practices on the farm while also educating the next generation of young farmers.



Brandon Hall examines corn stalks and their roots in a yield check in his customer's InVISION corn field



Brandon Hall meets with his customer in his InVISION seed corn plot



Taking the FS Stewardship Pledge

This stewardship pledge is our promise to the agriculture industry, the environment, and our farmer owners that we will promote and recommend products and practices that highlight our commitment to sustainable best management practices.

These products and practices include but are not limited to:

1. The 4Rs of nutrient management - right source, right rate, right time, right place.
2. Nitrogen stabilizers, nitrification inhibitors, nitrogen volatilization products.
3. Agronomic and environmentally sound nutrient recommendations.
4. Applied research focused on minimizing environmental impact, optimizing harvest yield, and maximizing input utilization.



Stephenson Service Company was a key partner at the Nutrient Stewardship Field Day, held in the summer of 2023, by the Illinois Farm Bureau and the Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau. John Musser, a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) with Stephenson Service Company, was one of the presenters at the field day



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



The West Central FS Technology and Learning Center provides a state-of-the-art learning experience for crop specialists

Carbon Sequestration Education

We're also passionate about furthering research and technology to aid the ag industry with carbon sequestration efforts. Educating employees throughout our System and their customers is a practical yet vital step in identifying and engaging in carbon sequestration efforts.

- We continue to educate our FS employees about carbon markets, both offset, and inset, and how they can bring opportunities to their customers.
- We are in a discovery phase on developing inset markets and examining how they will affect our business and growers' grain marketing opportunities.
- We conduct outreach meetings with growers to help explain carbon markets and how they can prepare for opportunities.
- We are evaluating data and agronomic needs to participate in carbon markets.
- We have enhanced crop specialists' training on Climate Smart Agronomy Practices to aid growers.



Guests look on during a West Central FS Technology and Learning Center field day



The West Central FS Technology and Learning Center hosts demonstrations throughout the year of different products, techniques and the technology behind them

Technology and learning to further sustainability

The Technology and Learning Center at West Central FS is designed to educate FS System employees, college ag students, and high school ag students with the latest technologies available to make better decisions field by field. The center uses cutting-edge technology as both a teaching tool and to equip their crop specialists with the most up-to-date data allowing them to be more efficient with

their time and equipment. The learning center embodies the commitment of employees throughout the System to use technology and innovation to make the best choices for their farmer customers and to help foster interest from the next generation.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Enduring Farms

Farmers know that their operations and the world's natural resources can all thrive within the same living ecosystem. And more than ever, farmers are assessing cropping practices and operational processes that minimize impact on the environment while improving farm profitability. FS Member Companies, along with their cooperative supplier, GROWMARK, created the Enduring Farm & Enduring Farm Plus awards to acknowledge those farmers who have adopted best management practices that optimize nutrient utilization, leading to long-term soil and water quality while enhancing ROI.

- To be considered for the Enduring Farm award, FS companies nominate farmer-customers who use certain sustainable best management practices on their farms. Growers that earn a combined score of 180 points or greater for nutrient management activities are designated as Enduring Farms.
- Growers who implemented additional agronomic and environmental management practices, earning at least an additional 90 points, are designated as an Enduring Farm Plus.

Enduring Farms designations were recently awarded for implementing nutrient management practices during the 2023 growing season, as well as their commitment to preserving and improving their land and natural resources for future generations.

To view the list of Enduring Farms for 2023, please visit www.GROWMARK.com.



Enduring Farms recipient and GROWMARK President and Chairman of the Board, Kevin Malchine, poses for a photo outside his family farm in Wisconsin

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

GROWMARK believes strong communities, whether rural, suburban, or urban, are vital for the well-being of the people who live and work in them. To help achieve this, GROWMARK works to advance the causes employees are passionate about by:

- Providing eight hours of volunteer time a year for employees to invest in a nonprofit of their choice.
- Matching the financial gifts employees make to registered 501C3 nonprofit organizations up to \$200 per employee through the giveMORE Program.
- Encouraging use of the Charitable Gift Program where the GROWMARK Foundation contributes \$50, per employee, per calendar year, to a registered 501C3 nonprofit organization of their choice.
- Promoting the volunteer opportunities and in-kind needs of the charitable organizations within our community to employees.
- Providing financial support to 501C3 nonprofit organizations through the GROWMARK Foundation.
- Encouraging and supporting employees who utilize their leadership skills and business knowledge to serve on the boards and committees of nonprofit organizations within their communities.

GROWMARK employees volunteered their time to deliver non-perishable food and toiletries to support a homeless shelter operated by the Salvation Army in Bloomington, Illinois



The GROWMARK Foundation made annual investments totaling **\$978,502** in 2023 in qualified 501C3 organizations in these categories:

28% Education programs such as scholarships and agriculture program support

25.3% Youth programs including AFA, FFA, 4-H and Ag in the Classroom

15.2% Local charities through our employee giveMore Match

18.1% Industry advocates including the Global Farmer Network and the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety

13.4% Cooperatives (support for cooperatives including our Enduring Commitments program)

The GROWMARK Foundation's Enduring Commitments program also matches member company contributions to qualifying 501C3 organizations, further leveraging the strength of the GROWMARK System and breadth of support for local initiatives. Since 2016, The GROWMARK Foundation matched nearly \$400,000 in member company contributions.



Employees volunteered to help load trucks of food at the Midwest Foodbank located in Normal, Illinois

SYSTEM OF SAFETY

360 SAFETY FOCUS

They're on the road, on the river, in the field, driving heavy equipment - GROWMARK and FS System employees are constantly on the move. We prioritize the safety of employees and the communities they live and work in by requiring a multitude of safety-focused training each year.

In 2023, the GROWMARK Safety Services team focused on safety training to achieve a 360 approach to ensure employees are equipped to stay safe on the job but also prepared for managing emergencies.

Trainings tailored to specific roles included:

- Crop applicators.
- Employees and drivers working with or transporting anhydrous ammonia.
- Farmer customers who transport and apply anhydrous ammonia.
- Grain handling compliance training.
- Truck drivers hauling both hazardous and non-hazardous materials.
- New employees.
- Fork truck drivers.



Firefighters practice applying water to the nurse tank during the simulation of a leak with Prairieland FS

Additional trainings offered throughout the year include:

- Environmental health, safety, and insurance compliance.
- Behavior-based safety boot camps and events.
- Community first responder mock drills.
- Hazard identification facility inspections.
- Hazardous material handling.
- OSHA compliance.
- Development and implementation of risk reviews.



A GROWMARK fertilizer terminal hosted a swift water rescue gear simulation for first responders along the Illinois River

New Century FS employees worked with GROWMARK Safety Services and the Department of Transportation to hold a safety rodeo where teams competed on compliance and safe practices



DECARBONIZATION EFFORTS

REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

The GROWMARK System helps to both feed and fuel the world which gives us a unique advantage to help reduce carbon output by how we transport and deliver our products. Through innovation partnerships and the use of technology, we're reducing carbon output throughout the GROWMARK System. Most importantly, we're constantly on the hunt for new ways to reduce our carbon output.



Employees check tank monitor data to help map out their routes

Manito Transit is a GROWMARK-owned bulk transportation trucking company that drives more than five million miles annually. Here are just a few of the ways we're using the Manito fleet to gain efficiencies and reduce carbon output.

- Utilizing data from GPS and telematics to help improve mileage efficiency and safety.
- Use of biodiesel helps

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and enhance energy security.

- 23 new trucks on the road in 2023 help improve fuel efficiency and lower emissions.

The Midwest Co-op Energy Division and Sunderland Co-operative Inc., in Ontario, Canada, are just a couple of the member cooperatives harnessing the power of data through tank monitors.

- Real-time tank monitor data helps drivers optimize routes.
- 2,500 tank monitors in Ontario consolidated delivery routes allowing the Midwest Co-op's truck fleet to be reduced.
- Sunderland Co-op's new tank monitors resulted in 22% fewer deliveries with total driver hours reduced by 13%.

A Manito Transit semi outfitted with Optimus Technologies as part of our biodiesel partnership



A truck rolls into the newly built fertilizer terminal after checking in at the easy automation terminal allowing it to move faster through the system

Facilities can also reduce carbon output and streamline operations. A 2023 renovation of the Seneca Fertilizer Terminal in Seneca, Illinois, turned this facility into a state-of-the-art operation thanks to smart building design, upgraded equipment, and new technology. Here are a few ways the new terminal runs on innovation while reducing its carbon output.

- On-site material handling was switched to electrical conveyance from diesel trucks; this can be potentially supported in the future with a renewable energy option.
- System design allows for more pre-staging of the product ahead of shipment, eliminating the need to start heavy equipment for individual loads in non-peak demand periods.
- A new material handler consumes less fuel per hour as a newer model and moves more material across the dock per hour thanks to a larger bucket.
- Digital tools allow drivers to confirm the product they need is available before traveling to the facility, which reduces the load times by over fifty percent.

GROWMARK

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OUR VISION

To be the best agricultural cooperative system in North America.

OUR MISSION

To improve the long-term profitability of our member-owners.



MID-CO COMMODITIES, Inc. offers professional price-risk management services, including up-to-the-minute market information and futures and options execution on all major exchanges of agricultural commodities.



SEEDWAY markets one of the most extensive and diverse commercial vegetable seed product lines in the industry, sold throughout the lower 48 states, and in Canada and Mexico. Seedway also offers extensive lines of turf and farm seed.



With more than 50 years of success in the petroleum and liquid hauling distribution business, Manito Transit distributes fuel oil, biodiesel, soybean oil, ethanol, chemicals, lube oil, and fertilizer for farm, commercial, and industrial use.



Southern States: In 2020, GROWMARK and Southern States Cooperative combined efforts to better serve customers in 21 southeastern states, providing a wide range of farm inputs including fertilizer, seed, livestock feed, pet food, animal health supplies, petroleum product, and more.



Introduced nearly 70 years ago, the FS brand represents a standard of excellence for agricultural and energy-related products.

There are more than 40 local FS cooperatives and retail divisions throughout Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada, employing more than 7,000 people.

OUR GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

To learn more about the GROWMARK System, visit www.GROWMARK.com



GROWMARK

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