

MANITOWOC COUNTY | 2014

# PROGRESS

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## Fields of opportunity

MANITOWOC COUNTY A LEADER IN AGRICULTURE,  
FARM ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

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**M**anitowoc County continues to be an agricultural leader in the state of Wisconsin. The 2012 (the latest data available) average production per cow was 25,000 pounds. The state average milk yield per cow in 2012 was 21,436 pounds.

In 2012, Manitowoc County dairy producers also sold over 1 billion pounds of milk for the sixth straight year. Only Clark, Marathon and Fond du Lac County dairy farmers produced more milk. Total Manitowoc County milk output in 2012 was 1.275 billion pounds.

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Manitowoc County is home to over 250 dairy farms with 51,000 cows, for an average of 200 cows per farm (up from 183 cows per farm in 2011 and 171 cows per farm in 2010). The average number of dairy cows per farm in Wisconsin is about 120. Manitowoc County dairy farms range in size from 15 cows to over 5,000 cows. Virtually all of these dairy farms are family owned and many are multi-family businesses. Manitowoc County routinely ranks in the top three Wisconsin counties in the number of cows per square mile.

In addition to ranking fourth in milk production per cow in the state, Manitowoc County ranks fourth out of the 72 Wisconsin counties, and in the top 30 counties in the United States, in total annual milk production. Furthermore, Manitowoc County ranks fifth in the state in the number of dairy cows.

### Environmental protection

In addition to being a leader in dairy production, Manitowoc County is also a leader in envi-

ronmental protection of the County's 205,000 acres of cropland. Farmers pride themselves in getting the most production from their land while at the same time preserving the soil and protecting ground and surface water.

Manitowoc County is fortunate to have numerous consultants, service providers, and government agencies that provide assistance to farmers as they strive to protect our natural resources. The Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Department, Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture), and Manitowoc County UW-Extension staff work closely with farmers, consultants and service providers to ensure that we do our best to preserve water quality.

Without question farmers in Manitowoc County have made tremendous progress over the years implementing what are known as Best Management Practices (BMPs), which are designed to protect the environment. A sampling of BMPs adopted by Manitowoc County farmers with the help of the aforementioned government agencies follows:

#### » Nutrient Management Plans

**Purpose:** To properly apply nutrients such as commercial fertilizer, manure, and crop residue to cropland so that nutrient entry into surface and groundwater is minimized.

**Progress:** Approximately 140,000 acres of 200,000 (70 percent) total cropland acres in Manitowoc County are recorded, with the county documenting that a nutrient plan meeting standards is being followed.

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