



Meet Our Supplier: Healthy Food Ingredients

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At the outset of the NUTRO Greater Ground program, Mars Pet Nutrition engaged one of our barley suppliers, [Healthy Food Ingredients \(HFI\)\(open in new tab\)](#), to collect on-farm data to help understand the status of soil health on farms that grow barley in its network. Due to sourcing shifts in late 2024, the NUTRO brand no longer sources ingredients from these farms. However, HFI continues to participate in the NUTRO Greater Ground program to help promote healthy soil practices with their farmers and remains a supplier of barley to Mars Pet Nutrition North America.

NUTRO and HFI have been collaborating for 3 years to collect and analyze data from barley farms within their supply network. This data has provided robust insights into current soil health practices, opportunities for continued improvement, and a credible snapshot of environmental impacts. [Eocene Environmental Group\(open in new tab\)](#), a third-party data partner, gathered and analyzed data that Mars used to establish a mass-balanced, baseline footprint of the barley crop sourced from HFI.



The results from 5 HFI's farmers representing 23,205 acres across 320 fields in Delaware and Maryland confirm that the implementation of soil health practices on these operations is associated with improved environmental outcomes when compared to conventional management.

A few highlights from the 2022-2023 crop year include:

- **Strengthening Soil's Armor with Cover Crops:** 86% of participating acres were planted with cover crops such as cereal rye, hairy vetch, oats, barley, and winter wheat. According to the 2022 U.S. Ag Census¹, the national average is 5% cover crop adoption.
- **Minimizing Soil Disturbance:** 61% of participating acres were managed with no-till and 29% of participating acres were managed with reduced tillage. This exceeds the national averages for no-till (28%) and reduced tillage (25%) according to the 2022 U.S. Ag Census².
- **Soil Health Benefits Add Up!:** The adoption rate of cover crops and conservation tillage practices among these participating farmers means that their soil is held in place with living roots and residue cover and is now being protected from intensive mechanical disturbances. When compared to conventional practices (i.e. a conventional tillage, no cover crop scenario), these in-field practices helped save an estimated 66,555 tons of soil from erosion, which is the equivalent of 4,160 dump trucks of soil!³.

Each participating farmer receives an individual, customized report with management recommendations based on their unique operation from the third-party data partner. HFI and NUTRO respect farmer privacy and only receive aggregated, anonymized data and reports. We believe that when we, together with suppliers and their farmers, better understand the data of soil, we'll have better insight into how we can help drive shifts in farming practices to better support soil health.

NUTRO brand is proud of the progress the GREATER GROUND program has made to support soil health through committed suppliers like HFI. Afterall, soil is where many ingredients used to craft our nutritious pet foods start, and we need soil to be able to provide food for our furry, four-legged companions in the future!

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[1] USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022 Census of Agriculture.

<https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/index.php>

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[1] Environmental impact values were generated by Eocene Environmental Group through its EcoPractices platform. These estimates reflect input data from participants' operations and adhere to models and methodologies that are supported by USDA-NRCS, other government agencies, and major universities.

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