





Meet the MSA Agricultural Services Team

Farm smarter. Not harder.






MSA
www.msa-ps.com

Who We Are

MSA's Agricultural Services team knows the joys, challenges and opportunities of today's farmers and producers.

We have first-hand experience with small family farms, large production facilities and the communities they serve — with a passion for helping to improve business, meet regulations, care for land and animals, and encourage thoughtful stewardship of the environment.

How We Help

Our Agricultural Services team takes time to truly understand each operation's unique needs. We assist from planning, design and funding all the way through construction and operation — utilizing our network of multidisciplinary experts to find the right people to get the job done. Whether it is manure management, permitting, farmstead planning, structural design, feed and fuel storage areas, stormwater systems, robotics integration, site development, streambank stabilization or planning for a farm expansion project — we're here to see the right solution through, start to finish.

Get to know the MSA agricultural experts that make it all happen...

Andy Skwor, PE

Agricultural Services Team Leader

- B.S., Civil Engineering & B.S., Environmental Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Platteville
- Licensed Professional Engineer: WI, MI, MN, IA
- Professional Dairy Producers – Advisor to the Board of Directors (2018-2022)

GET TO KNOW ANDY

...or click to email Andy directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
I enjoy helping people, and working with the people of agriculture is fascinating, challenging and educational. To be able to work for the people who create our food supply is awesome. I also think the farming community is underserved because it's not well understood by most and to be able to help people solve problems, sort through regulations and accomplish goals is extremely rewarding. I never thought I would be able to work in Ag as an engineer. It truly is a career that I set my mind to after gaining experience out of college and created.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?
I have tons of favorite farm experiences or memories. Personally, helping out at my aunt and uncle's dairy farm growing up has lots of memories. Professionally, all the experiences and memories of our efforts to help farmers — and there is that one day where the farmer and their family says, "thank you." There is just something about how a sincere thank you carries a person through the tough spots of a project or job.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
I would say the big three are: consumer pressures, regulatory requirements, and price. Farmers are told what their products are worth and middle parties have great control on the amount of money that comes back to the farmer; that variability makes it hard to sustain business. Conversely, costs continue to rise in production agriculture. There can also be misperceptions about large/CAFO farms and how they operate. It might surprise people that many of these large entities are extremely environmentally friendly and protective.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
Manure processing and nutrient recycling is exciting as well as the future of livestock production management.

If you could tell farmers one thing that would be most beneficial, what would that be?
Determine your farm's ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance metric to maximize your financial interests.

What is MSA's approach to providing solutions to Ag clients?
I feel our approach is about the farm and the people, not about the project. We truly want to develop a relationship with our farmer clients and be with them for the long term.

What is a progressive idea or proactive solution you have brought to a farmer/producer?
I attribute our expertise to applying the right solution to solve the problem. We typically take ideas from farmers and engineer them to fit design standards and regulations. Some of our more inventive solutions are our clean and contaminated water separation designs for feed storage. This was not my idea, but it takes common products and puts them together to fit the management of feed storage systems.

What drives you in the day to day?
I want to earn that next "thank you."

Jenise Anderson, PE

Project Manager

- M.S., Biological & Agricultural Engineering, Texas A&M University
- B.S., Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Texas A&M University
- Licensed Professional Engineer: WI, KY, LA, MN, PA

GET TO KNOW JENISE

...or click to email Jenise directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?

The variety and broad spectrum of study originally drew me into the degree program, and the variety of projects kept me here; no two jobs are the same. I wasn't raised on a farm but have a passion for agriculture and helping farmers make the best decisions for their families and businesses.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?

One of my favorite things about this particular engineering job is being able to hang out with animals. I have specific memories of stressful days where once I walked into a barn the feeling of stress melted away, and I've lost count of the number of times I've made a fool of myself for a farm dog…

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?

Honestly, any time I see new tech being introduced (or older, existing tech being applied to agriculture), I get really excited — most recently it's been drones for pesticide/fertilizer application and a "smart" barn.

What is MSA's approach to providing solutions to Ag clients?

We care about the long-term viability and success of your farm; if you'd like, we would like to be there for the long-term farmstead planning to make sure decisions you make today set you up well for the next 10 years and onward. We also want to help you navigate the regulatory agencies and build relationships that will lead to smoother projects.

What drives you in the day to day?

I've always had a tendency to fight for the underdog, and I do that every day working for farmers.

Megan DePasse

Engineering Technician II

• B.S., Agricultural Engineering Technology, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

GET TO KNOW MEGAN

...or click to email Megan directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
What attracted me to the field of agriculture was being able to work with farmers to help them grow and succeed. My path to the farming community started at the family dairy farm that my grandparents started with just three cows.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?
I had a lot of fun growing up around my uncle's dairy farm and experiencing every part of farming. Whenever I was available, my job would be to take care of and feed the calves. They are my favorite part of the dairy farm.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
I think the biggest struggle for farmers is to stay big enough to keep up with the demand and to find workers.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
I am most excited about robotic milkers. The process they use is fascinating.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
MSA does a good job of listening to the client and working with them to figure out what the best solution is.

What drives you in the day to day?
My drive is to get the project done for the client in the best way possible.

Kaesey Glaess, PE

Project Engineer

- B.S., Agricultural Engineering, Iowa State University
- Licensed Professional Engineer: IL, IA, MN, WI

GET TO KNOW KAESEY

...or click to email Kaesey directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
I grew up on a first-generation family farm in southeast Minnesota raising predominately Angus cattle, with some chickens and feeder pigs on the side. After being introduced to the Ag community through showing livestock and general livestock judging, I knew I wanted to stay in Ag — both for the people in it, and the impact it has on the world. Engineering came by chance. One day in high school I decided if engineering could be applied to raising livestock, that sounded fun — and I never looked back.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?
Growing up, my favorite times were the hours spent in the barns raising and training stock to bring to shows, and the relationships this cultured. Now, there's a serenity in standing in a pasture with a herd of happy cows.

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?
Evolving technology, which is allowing the waste produced on farms to be used in new ways, whether it's harnessed for renewable energy, composted, utilized as solid bedding or numerous other options. There are so many options with the potential to also add a secondary revenue stream to the farm.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
Sustainability is such a buzzword, but I love seeing the innovative ideas we see the industry taking to keep the industry viable and make its environmental impacts as positive as possible.

If you could tell farmers one thing that would be most beneficial, what would that be?
Be adaptable and open to the new ideas and technology that are continuing to be introduced.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
Because we're the best! Joking aside, I think we have a well-bonded team where each person brings a different strength to the table. This allows us to effectively solve problems and there's always someone on the team with expertise in a different area to help.

What is MSA's approach to providing solutions to Ag clients?
Our relationships with our clients enable us to work with them and encompass their vision for not only the project we're doing now, but the farm's vision moving forward and how we can set them up for success in the future.

What drives you in the day to day?
The way I grew up. Now I get to help farmers stay relevant in the industry so they can raise another generation to love agriculture and livestock like I do.

Jared Grunewald, EIT

Graduate Engineer II

- B.S., Civil Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Engineer in Training: WI

GET TO KNOW JARED

...or click to email Jared directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
I wasn't raised on a farm, but I've always appreciated the importance of agriculture and it always interested me. I had two internships with a county's land and water conservation department while I was in college, and that is what planted the agricultural seed in me. After working in another county's land and water conservation department for over eight years, those experiences have really allowed that seed to grow. Designing agricultural practices and helping farmers has grown into a passion of mine and it is also very rewarding to know that I am helping the agricultural community.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?
Just playing and running around in my friend's barn as a kid. We were even able to make a small corn maze in their field.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
The main challenges I would say would be the ever-changing milk prices and the difficulty to find good labor. It's also disappointing to hear how frequently a farm's next generation is not interested in farming. I believe this is contributing to the decline of farmers overall.

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?
I would say new methods of farming. I believe farmers are beginning to understand soil health better, which is leading to increased productivity, less tillage, and more plant diversity with the use of cover crops, which also leads to increased infiltration and reduced erosion. Changing to these newer ideas and methods can seem difficult to some farmers, but a lot of people are seeing the benefits they provide.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
Farm automation is fascinating to me. The ability to use automated harvesters, autonomous tractors, and drones in crop cultivation will help with the labor shortages we are seeing, and I'm excited to see where these new technologies will take us.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
Our team truly focuses on our clients' needs — not only what they are focusing on now, but also helping them plan for the future. We communicate effectively with our clients and focus on building relationships with them.

What drives you in the day to day?
Serving my clients and knowing that I am helping them achieve their goals. Also, I am an avid outdoorsman, so knowing that I am doing my part to protect our soil and water resources is very satisfying.

Ian Hansen, PE

Project Engineer

- B.S., Biological Systems Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Licensed Professional Engineer: WI

GET TO KNOW IAN

...or click to email Ian directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
Farmers are some of the most connected to the happenings of their communities. Agricultural engineering is particularly interesting because you get to work with the decision-maker and user of the projects you are designing. Most of these farms are family businesses and the next-generation user is already involved in the project planning. It's a great framework for building long-lasting relationships.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
Maintaining profitability amid high production costs. Navigating export markets.

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?
Staying in touch with nutritional, environmental, and ethical demands of consumers. From my own experiences in various fitness communities, there's a lot of tribalism over different diets, such as carnivore, vegan, etc. It appears crucial to generate a positive and factually correct narrative that aligns with consumer demands.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
Animal-wearable tech and the application of its data collection. Also, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released Effluent Guidelines Program Plan 15 in 2023 to gather data and determine if they will pursue additional rule-making applicable to CAFOs. The study will take years to complete, so we will see where it goes.

If you could tell farmers one thing that would be most beneficial, what would that be?
The MSA Agricultural team is very successful in helping to secure external funding for projects.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
Expert relationship management with farmers, regulators, equipment suppliers, and contractors.

What is MSA's approach to providing solutions to Ag clients?
MSA is a great blend of a small and large engineering firm. We have great office coverage with agricultural staff scattered about to serve all of Wisconsin, parts of Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. We have experience with many types of farms, site conditions, and stakeholders to provide the best guidance to our clients.

What is a progressive idea or proactive solution you have brought to a farmer/producer?
Existing system retrofits. Older infrastructure with no design documentation can be challenging to assess for compliance with current standards. Sometimes, things can be retrofitted to achieve compliance with minimal disturbance of existing infrastructure. This ultimately reduces costs and disruptions to the farm's operations.

What drives you in the day to day?
Client satisfaction.

Luke Hickey

Engineering Technician II

• B.S., Agricultural Engineering Technology, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

GET TO KNOW LUKE

...or click to email Luke directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
I really enjoy interacting with farmers and agricultural professionals. It's fascinating to see how each operation is managed a little bit differently to fit that specific farm or client's way of operating. That, combined with the opportunity to step foot on the farmsteads and fields of farms that are really the backbone of Wisconsin's economy is a big draw for me. The most rewarding part of working in agriculture is watching a successful project come to a close and seeing the positive impact of your work on a farm.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?
My favorite agricultural experience was working on a ranch near the East Gate of Yellowstone in Cody, Wyoming, as an internship in college. The ranch produced hay, cattle, and cutting horses.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
In my opinion, a big struggle in the industry is the opportunity to obtain farmland. Land prices are at an all-time high where someone looking to expand his or her operation really needs to sit down and pencil it out to make sure they can even be profitable at the end of the day. The competition for farmland from other industries and development is also higher than ever seen before.

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?
The biggest opportunity for agriculture as a whole right now is the number of advancements in technology offered to the farm. Advancements ranging from items as big as a manure digester to something such as an agronomist providing the latest and greatest field practices that profit the farm while supporting regenerative agriculture are a few examples of the possibilities out there right now for producers to capitalize on.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
I am really excited to see how many operations start to implement drones into their field work. I have my Part 107 license and have always thought drones were exciting. Every year you see a few more drones at Ag shows and hear about a few more producers starting to hire drone pilots to spray and even broadcast cover crops on the farm. I am really interested to see where this technology will go in the next five years.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
An Ag client who hires MSA to be their consultant is going to be satisfied with the commitment we have to them and their farm. At MSA, the Ag team only works on agricultural projects, which gives us the ability to continue to grow and build our expertise directly related to agriculture. A client should be able to find satisfaction in knowing that they are working with a team that specializes in and has a passion for agriculture. Every member of the Ag team has chosen to be on the Ag team because they enjoy agriculture.

What drives you in the day to day?
Knowing that our team is supporting and providing expertise to hard-working farms and farm families throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest drives daily to perform to the best of my ability.

Dale Mitte

Senior Engineering Technician II

- B.S., Agriculture, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
- 30+ years working in the agricultural engineering field, both in the private and public sector

GET TO KNOW DALE

...or click to email Dale directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?

I grew up on a small farm in Clark County, Wisconsin, and was always involved in it. During my time at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, I took a soils class and loved it. After that I decided it was that field — agriculture — that I wanted to work in. From there, and after graduation, I was able to gain employment at the Clark County Land Conservation Department as a Conservation Technician, which allowed me to work with soils, but then learn and work in the Ag Engineering field. The most rewarding thing about working in my field is after getting an engineering practice built such as a waste storage facility, feed storage facility, or even a grassed waterway, is getting it constructed and finished for the landowner to use.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?

I see the biggest struggles right now are the same as the last 30 years: the ups and downs of milk prices and the volatility of prices of materials, fuel, etc. — and how those things impact the planning and construction of a proposed project. What scale can it really be built to? Can it be built to the owner's wishes and needs, with time and labor factors involved?

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?

One of the biggest opportunities is producers utilizing more robotics in milking, thus helping with their labor needs and freeing them up to attend to all the other components of the farming operation.

If you could tell farmers one thing that would be most beneficial, what would that be?

Remember that any agricultural project these days usually takes months to reach completion, not days. So, if a producer wants to construct a waste storage facility, for example, I would tell them to plan ahead and understand it may take some time before it can be fully completed and put into use.

Also, I would tell them to be flexible during the initial planning period. There are a lot of things that factor into a final project such as site conditions, standards and ordinances, or engineering requirements that may affect the final design and cost.

What is a progressive idea or proactive solution you have brought to a farmer/producer?

I always pay attention to how things are operating on a farm and sometimes see different ways to approach a construction project or bring new techniques to the table — sharing those ideas with producers or contractors to help them succeed.

What drives you in the day to day?

Just trying to help out. As I like to say, we all have to work together on a project so it will turn out for the best.

Brady Vaassen

Graduate Engineer

• B.S., Agricultural Engineering, Iowa State University

GET TO KNOW BRADY

...or click to email Brady directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?
Simply put, my upbringing is what attracted me to the field of agricultural engineering. I was raised on a hobby farm and spent most of my free time on my grandparents' larger farm around the animals and large equipment. This field has given me the opportunity to combine my passion for agriculture with the skills I've developed through past experiences to better serve the community I was raised in.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share, whether from your personal life or while you've been employed at MSA?
My favorite personal farm-related memories would be the time I've been able to spend with my family. My time with MSA has given me the opportunity to continue working in similar environments. While on construction sites, I've been able to share a laugh with contractors and farmers which is always a rewarding experience.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?
In my opinion, the two biggest struggles for the industry are the increasing global demand for food and commodities, and the low number of investments that are being made for development, comparatively.

What are the biggest opportunities for farmers/producers right now?
Right now, the biggest opportunity for the industry is embracing the current technological advancements. These can help farmers optimize their resources and improve the farms' overall efficiency

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?
There is a lot of buzz around artificial intelligence right now. The use of robotics has become a more prevalent practice in the industry, and I am excited to see how AI might affect this practice.

If you could tell farmers one thing that would be most beneficial, what would that be?
I would advise them that the future of agriculture is all about efficiency. Be open to the advancements that are available, because one day, that change could make a difference on the farm for the next several generations.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?
MSA approaches each client with the hopes of developing a long-term relationship. This shows that we care about the success and future of each individual client.

What is MSA's approach to providing solutions to Ag clients?
Our team is not just focused on the end goal of each project; we have the future of the farm operation in mind. From the technical aspects to the logistics of permitting and regulations, we implement practices that ensure a successful operation.

What is a progressive idea or proactive solution you have brought to a farmer/producer?
I like to think of all of our projects as a proactive solution. We are implementing waste management practices that ensure the safety and preservation of our natural resources.

What drives you in the day to day?
As a part of this team, I feel like I am doing my part in preserving our natural resources, all while trying to ensure the benefit of the farmer.

Rusty Zimmerman, EIT

Graduate Engineer II

- B.S., Biosystems & Bioproducts Engineering, University of Minnesota
- Engineer in Training: MN

GET TO KNOW RUSTY

...or click to email Rusty directly →

What attracts you to the field of agriculture or agricultural engineering?

I've worked at three other consulting firms since graduating college in stormwater and natural resources. I couldn't shake the desire to be in Wisconsin and around dairy farming. I have a background working at my uncle's small dairy farm. Being able to tap back into those roots while using the engineering skills I've acquired has been a very rewarding fit.

Do you have any favorite farm-related experiences or memories you'd like to share?

I have very fond memories of milking at my uncle's 60-head dairy. His dog, Bailey, would help us get the cows out and would bark at them until they were all out in the pasture. From the engineering side, one of our clients had a manure transfer failure and, subsequently, a lagoon failure and partial reconstruction. At the time of the failure, nobody understood what the cause was. The project required coordination with all agencies, the farm, contractors, and MSA to first identify the cause and collaboratively work together to get the lagoon reconstructed. Plenty of stress was all around as nobody had seen what we were seeing before. I learned more from that project and why engineering standards and specifications exist. We hope this is a "once in a career" experience, but the lessons learned will carry forward for my entire career. It wasn't a 'favorite' per se, but it was definitely memorable.

What are the biggest struggles for farmers/producers right now?

Labor. It seems to be a steady trend towards hard-to-find workers and keep workers. I think that's bigger than just agriculture, but it is still worth noting.

What agricultural trends, technologies or advancements are most exciting to you?

I'm most excited when we are working with farms that are innovative themselves and bring their own ideas to the table.

Why do Ag clients like working with MSA?

Communication. Our Ag team actively chooses to engage clients regularly and communicate with contractors, clients, and regulatory agencies. We critically think through what our clients want and are willing to ask the right and sometimes hard questions. We can design a system to fit your needs now, but will ask, "Does this serve your farm's vision and business operation long term?"

What drives you in the day to day?

Cows, do I need to say more? I don't think you will find many engineers that can say they are not bothered by the smell of manure and getting their boots dirty. I also think it's important to preserve and protect the vital resources Wisconsin has. I enjoy smallmouth bass fishing the rivers on the weekends and it gives me a greater drive to help take care of the water quality in Wisconsin. Managing agricultural waste is the best way for me to do my part.

Still have questions?

Learn about MSA's Agricultural Services here:

Let's start a conversation.

www.msa-ps.com | (800) 362-4505

MSA