

# Sustainable Fibers vs. Fast Fashion

Opportunities to Reshore the U.S. Fiber System

August 16, 2023



# SAFSF Overview

SAFSF is the leading national philanthropy serving organization (PSO) for funders seeking to drive change in support of just and sustainable food and agriculture systems.

Members include endowed and self-funded foundations and investors, as well as certain types of intermediaries, such as community development finance institutions (CDFIs), community foundations, funding collaboratives, and regranting organizations.

**Vision:** All resources invested in food and agriculture systems enhance our collective well-being.

**Values:** The five values of **collaboration, equity, respect, stewardship, and integrity** guide our decision-making process in all our work.

Collaboration | Equity | Respect | Stewardship | Integrity



# Today's Speakers

- **Shannon Welsh and Angela Wartes-Kahl**, Fibrevolution (Oregon)
- **Eric Henry**, TS Designs (North Carolina)
- **Rachel Higgins**, Pennsylvania Fibershed and All Together Now Pennsylvania
- **Jim Kleinschmit**, Other Half Processing (Minnesota)
- **Sarah Kelley**, Fibers Fund (D.C.)
- **Traci Bruckner**, SAFSF (Nebraska)



# Fibrevolution (Oregon)



Shannon  
Welsh,  
Co-Founder &  
CEO



Angela Wartes-  
Kahl,  
Co-Founder &  
COO

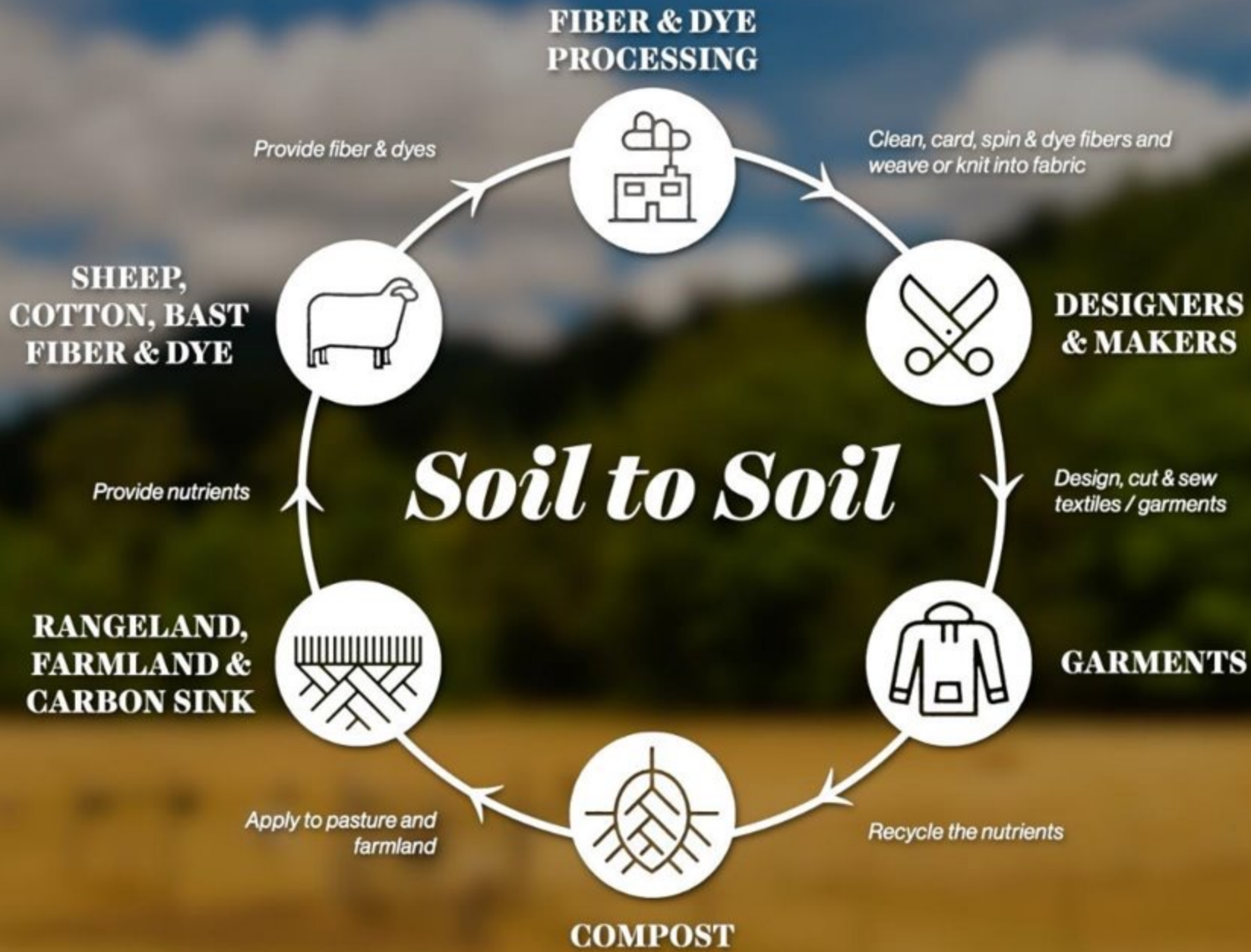


**Realities of our current “Fast Fashion” system**



**The opportunity before us to move towards a “Soil to Soil” system**









**Fibrevolution Inc Bast Fiber Producers** was founded by Shannon Welsh and Angela Wartes-Kahl in 2017, with a focus to bring linen production back to Oregon and North America.

**[www.fibre-evolution.com](http://www.fibre-evolution.com)**



The **North American Linen Association (NALA)** was established in 2022, with nine Founding Board Members representing the United States and Canada. NALA brings together interest groups from all stages of the supply chain to share in infrastructure development, networking, best practices, and marketing campaigns to advance the North American fiber flax to linen industry.

**[www.northamericanlinen.org](http://www.northamericanlinen.org)**





# People + Planet

**A 40-Year Journey  
to Cultivating  
Responsible Clothing**

*by Eric Henry*

**tsdesigns**  
cultivating responsible clothing™

# Triple Bottom Line



**People**



**Planet**



**Profit**

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# Challenges of Globalization



**Connect with Eric Henry**

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# Knowing the Farmer



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# Natural Fibers

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# Pennsylvania Fibershed

01 Support Sustainable and Circular Textile Solutions

02 Connect people along the textile supply chain



03 Education for designers and the public

04 Research







# Fast Fashion is a Problem, Natural Fiber is the Solution

01 Microplastics  
ruining our  
water and Earth

02 Health problems



03 85% ends up in  
landfill

04 Can take up to  
500 years to  
decompose

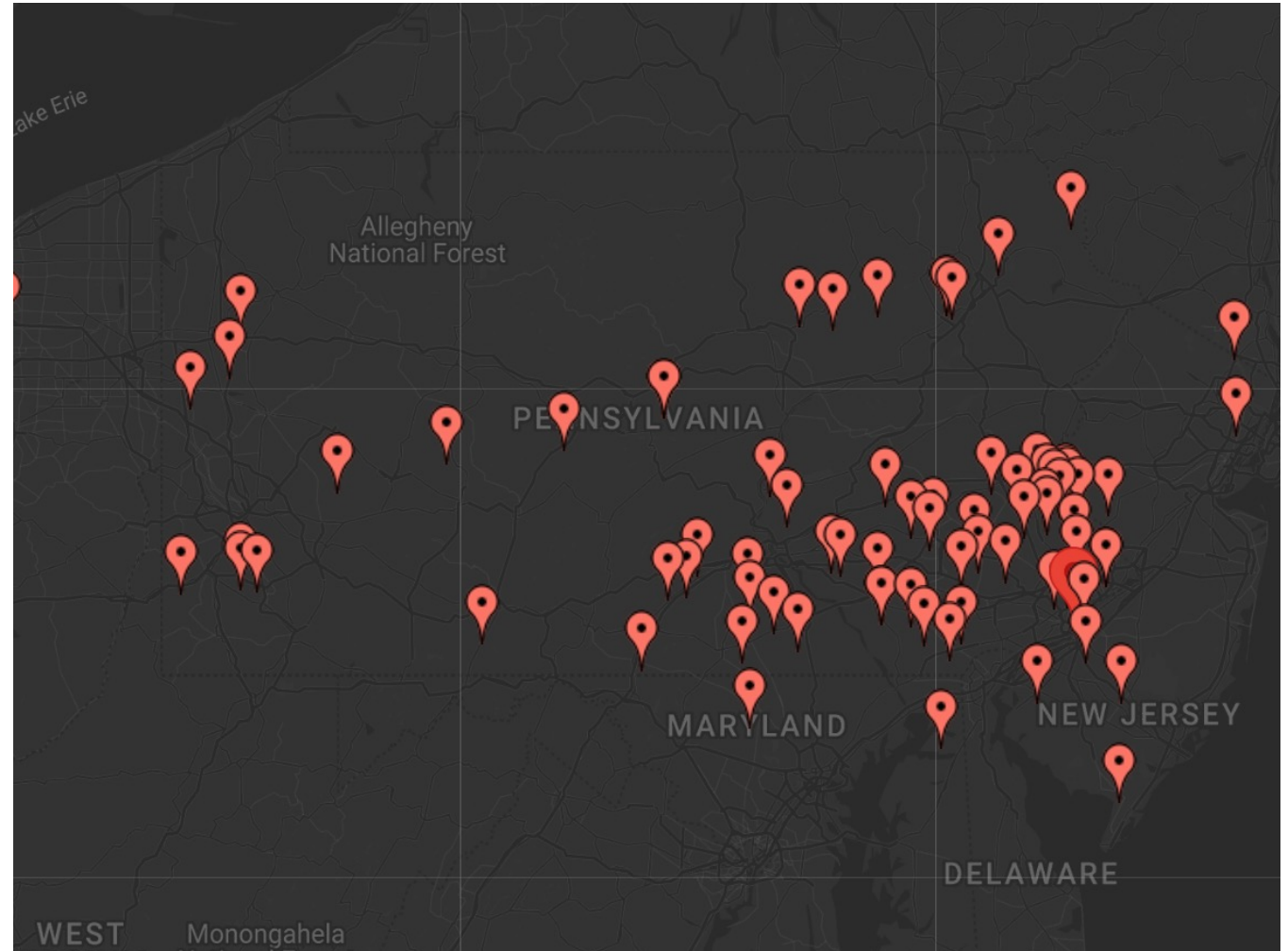




# PA Fibers

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- Hemp Fiber
- Flax (Linen)
- Wool
- Alpaca
- Mohair
- Merino





# Supply Chain in PA

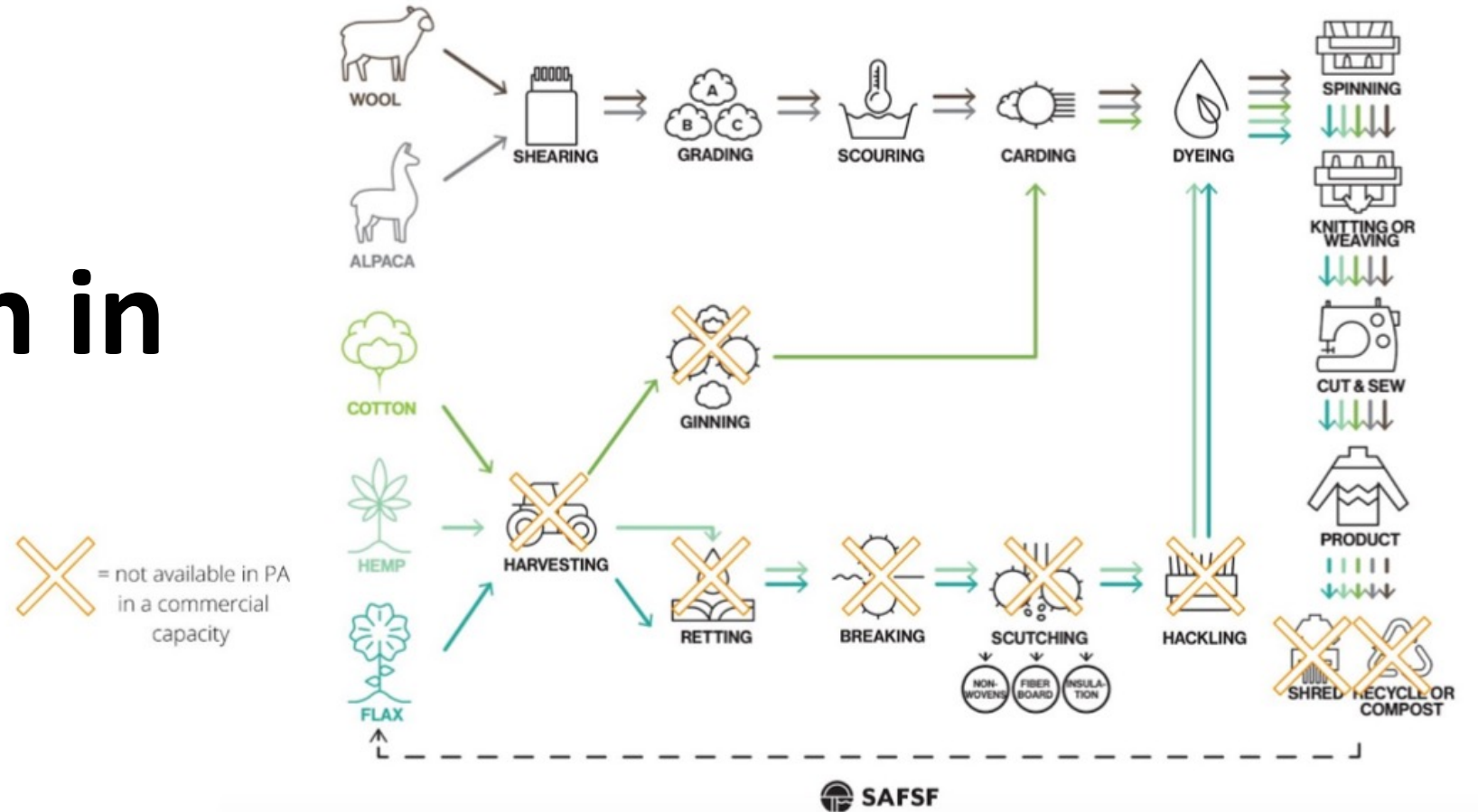


Image adapted from SAFSF Fiber Roadmap





# History/Facts of Hemp Fiber in PA

A climate-positive plant with strong fibers and antimicrobial properties

01 Dates back to the 18th and 19th century in PA, even a town called Hempville, PA

02 Prominent crop due to its versatility: rope, textiles and

» more



03 1937 Growing hemp fiber was banned in PA

04 2017 Farmers are able to grow hemp fiber again



# Tuscarora Mills Hemp Fabric

- 01 Fabric made of natural fibers
- 02 Currently importing most fiber because of lack of local processing
- 03 Beautiful fabrics, but not at a price point that is affordable for most designers







# Hemp Black Ink & Dyes Made in PA

- 01 Eliminates petroleum and potentially dangerous fumes, protecting our water and our workers.
  - 02 Made from hemp grown in the US
  - 03 Sustainable and non-toxic water based aqueous solution to produce grey, jet black and conductive ink outputs.
- »





# History/Facts of Flax Linen in PA

Flax is a **climate-positive** plant that's **easy to grow**. It requires **little-to-no chemical inputs or irrigation**. It protects waterways, **remediates soil**, and provides pollinator habitat.

01 Came to PA late 1600's with Dutch and German settlers arriving in Germantown (now part of Philadelphia). The Germantown seal of 1691 includes the flax flower, an indication of how integral flax linen was to these early settlers.



02 Production of flax linen first faltered in Pennsylvania during the early industrial revolution, losing the race to cotton with the advent of the cotton gin and the use of the labor of enslaved peoples making cotton much cheaper to produce







01 Changing the textile industry and creating economic opportunity that's actually good for the planet.

02 Organizing farmers, creating infrastructure for processing, and making American linen possible again.

03 Current Growers:

- Lunaria Farms/Coexist, Berks County
  - Timberline, Atlantic County
  - Kneehigh Farm, Chester County
  - Owen Taylor Ture Love Seeds, Montgomery County
  - Weaving Roots Farm, Adams County
  - Jean-Paul's Farm, Indiana County
  - Tuscarora Mills, Bedford County
- » • Lauren Vitagliano, NJ





# History/Facts of Wool in PA

01 Biodegradable/  
plastic free/no  
microplastics  
Warm  
Breathable  
Odor resistant  
Long lasting  
Durable  
Adjusts to body  
temperature

02 Sheep can be  
used for solar  
grazing



03 We lack mills  
and scouring in  
PA

04 Wool needs to  
be subsidized  
for economic  
stability







# Wool Blanket Project

Tuscarora Mills



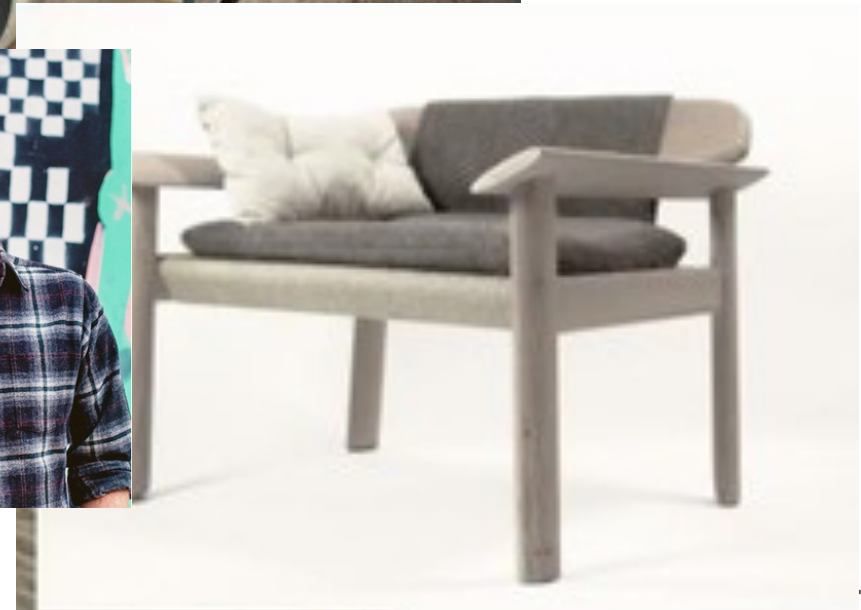
- 01 Linking together the wool supply chain
- 02 Using all PA manufacturing





# Common Objective/OKA Terra Furniture made from PA wool

- 01 Bridging the gap from farm to furniture
- 02 Using regenerative wool from PA farms
- 03 Using farming practices that improve soil health and increase biodiversity on their farms.







# Natural Dye Co-op

- 01 Circular Systems for food and floral waste
- 02 Includes: restaurants, farmers, florists, caterers, designers, dyers, fabric mills, transportation, etc.
- 03 Create jobs and addressing infrastructure



Collaboration | Equity | Respect | Stewardship | Integrity











## Minnesota Specific Benefit Company Mission

To create high value and high-quality products in ways that are ethical and respectful to the animal, and support regenerative farmers, ranchers & agricultural systems.

Collaboration | Equity | Respect | Stewardship | Integrity



Founded by Jim & Mark Kleinschmit, brothers raised on Nebraska family farm.

OHP buys and sells traceable hides, offal & other byproducts from “the other half” of verified regeneratively-raised livestock.

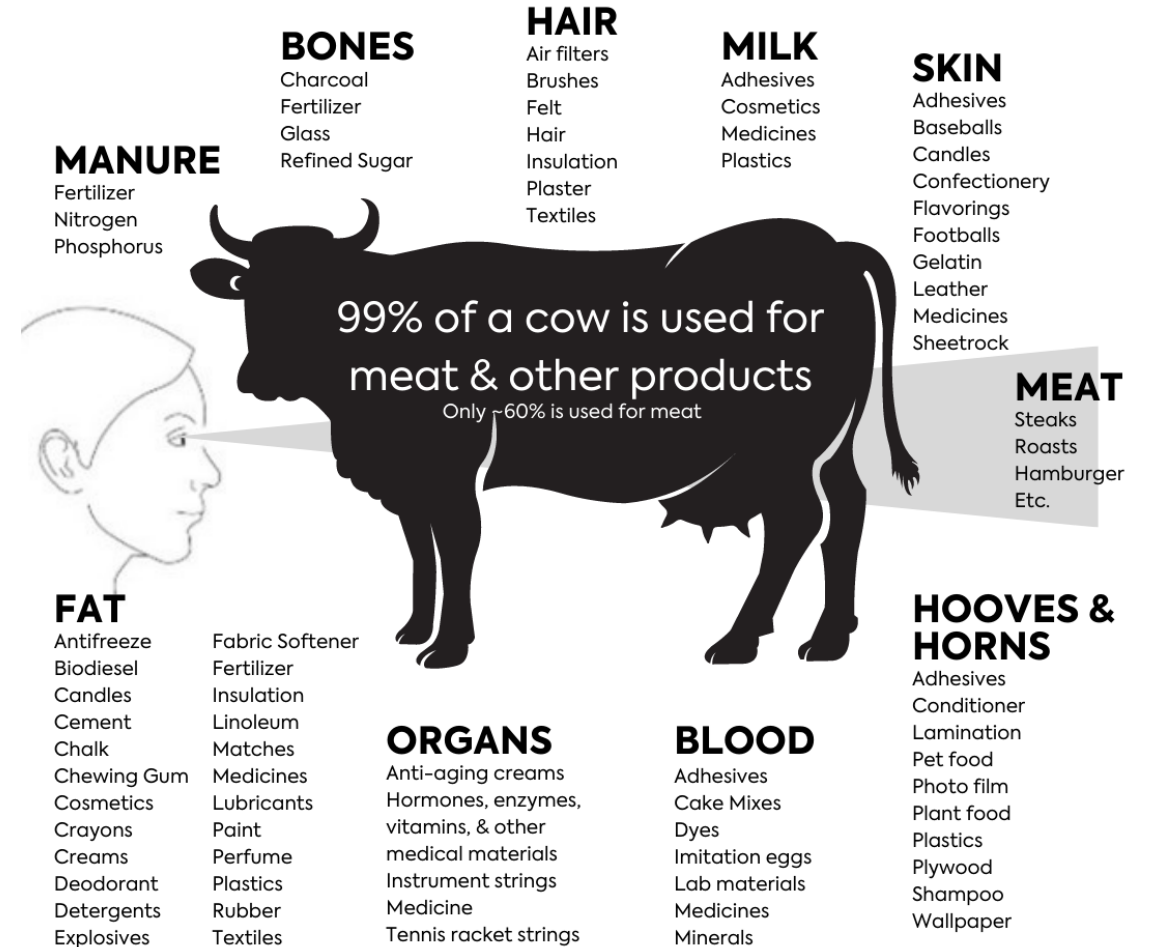


# Valuing “the Other Half”

- Most regenerative and value-added meat companies work with small-medium scale custom meat processors.
- These meat processors are disadvantaged in current commodity byproduct markets.
- Low market prices & reduced collection capacity can quickly shift byproducts from a sales & profit opportunity to a disposal obligation & cost.
- Extra processor costs/losses are shared with meat companies & producers, reducing the profitability of the entire supply chain.

## MEAT TUNNEL VISION

The Regeneration Weekly | soil.works

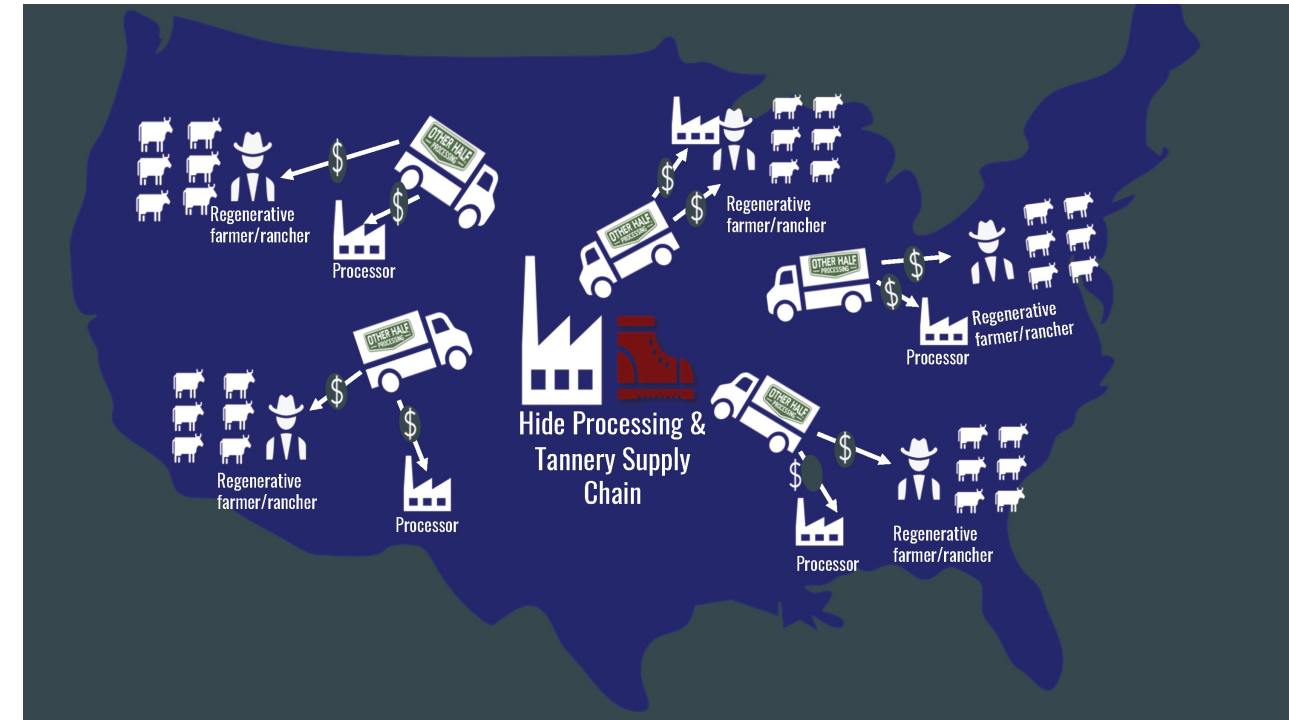


"Where's the (Not) Meat? Byproducts from Beef and Pork Production", United States Department of Agriculture  
[https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/outlooks/37427/8801\\_1dpm20901.pdf?v=3619.2](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/outlooks/37427/8801_1dpm20901.pdf?v=3619.2)



# The Other Half in the Market: Regenerative Hides & Leather

- Hides are traceable with verifiable climate, environmental & animal welfare claims.
- Better animal utilization & valuation.
- Guaranteed “producer premium” payment to farmer/rancher through aggregation partner or meat company.
- More income/profits for meat and hide processors (which also can contribute to lower producer/processing costs).
- Provides apparel brands & consumers more choices and ways to support regenerative farmers and ranchers.
- Brand partners include Timberland, Coach, Range Revolution and more!



# Why we need Congressional action in the Farm Bill

- Sustainable fiber producers and processors are part of the larger U.S. food and agriculture system
- Solidifying this sector's **access to federal agriculture programs** will help:
  - Create jobs
  - Support rural community revitalization
  - Reduce reliance on environmentally extractive fiber production and processing
  - Reduce textile waste



# Mobilizing public-private financing



 **FIBERS  
FUND**

Building an equitable and regenerative U.S. textile industry

Photo: Paige Green Photography

 **SAFSF**     **FIBERSHED**     **mission driven  
finance**

# SAFSF's Sustainable Fibers Farm Bill Platform

- Our policy options include no-cost tweaks that could be made to existing farm bill programs
- Designed to address the gaps and levers identified in the SAFSF Fibers Roadmap and by our partners
- Our proposed **Sustainable Fibers Revolving Loan Fund Pilot Program** would be a new provision to help close the gaps that exist in accessing capital and technical assistance specifically designed for sustainable fiber producers



# The Sustainable Farms, Fibers and Forests Act

- Sen. Luján has introduced **The Sustainable Farms, Fibers and Forests Act**, to:
  - Amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to include support for sustainable fibers in the **Local Agriculture Market Program**, and for other purposes
  - Define “sustainable fibers”
- Let us know if your boss is interested in learning more and/or co-sponsoring



# **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE** *and* **FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS**

Questions?

Email SAFSF Senior Director of Public Policy  
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