



Creating Sustainable Outcomes for Agriculture

Updated April 14, 2008

Foundational Context and Principles

The primary objectives of this effort among NGOs, growers, and businesses throughout the agricultural supply chain are:

- To identify criteria for sustainable agriculture that are open to a diversity of technologies; and
- To support the implementation of production systems that lead to broad performance improvements against these criteria.

We believe world food demands, grower needs, and desirable land use patterns all require intensification of agriculture. We further believe that increased production must be accomplished in a manner that does not negatively impact, and actually improves, overall environmental and societal outcomes.

We believe sustainable agriculture can meet the needs of the present while improving the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by focusing on these specific, critical outcomes:

- Increasing productivity to meet future nutritional needs while decreasing impacts on the environment, including water, soil, habitat, air quality and climate emissions, and land use
- Improving human health through access to safe, nutritious food
- Improving the social and economic well-being of agricultural communities

This group is leading a broad based conversation to define specific actions that can have the greatest impact on sustainable agriculture by:

- Focusing on outcomes and results.
- Allowing growers to find the best ways to achieve results through a full range of agricultural technology choices.
- Applying information at the grower-by-grower level in support of the larger, overarching goal of shifting the entire sustainability curve.
- Driving change where the opportunity is greatest, throughout conventional agriculture.
- Providing economic rewards that encourage growers and the value chain to adopt and leverage systems that lead to performance improvement.
- Serving as a solutions provider for companies throughout the supply chain who are endeavoring to both report and improve their sustainability footprint from farm to table.
- Creating pull through the production system all the way to the consumer.
- Using peer-reviewed science to identify goals and measure impacts and results.

We believe we can advance the sustainability curve by promoting the better practices already utilized by the 10 to 20% most progressive and efficient growers today. We will begin with a focus on U.S. agriculture, but we believe that much of what is accomplished can and should be applied globally. We intend to work toward that end.

We see growers gaining value by participating to demonstrate their care for the environment and by being a part of a broad coalition to make agriculture more sustainable, as we have defined it above. We believe that the resulting outcomes will, in time, have a positive impact on each grower's livelihood. We further believe that, as a result of this effort, consumers will come to

understand that niche products are not the only, or even the best, way to make agriculturally sustainable purchasing choices.

We intend to promote better informed decision-making and practices throughout the agricultural supply chain by using these clearly defined key impact areas based on outcomes. We will utilize science-based mechanisms for assessing baselines and progress against key impact areas. And, we will set targets and document performance over time.

While keeping these principles, this effort is inclusive. Yet as we add voices to our effort it is important to ensure they understand and support our foundational context and principles.

