

Honeybear Brands Sustainability Executive Summary

Introduction

Established in the 1970s, Honeybear Brands is one of the leading developers, growers, and suppliers of premium apple varieties in North America. Our operations span both North and South America with growing and production operations with premier domestic and international partners located in the United States, Canada, and Chile, providing our customers with year-round access to high-quality fruit.

Our sustainability journey began over ten years ago with the creation of the TruEarth certification, a label that highlights farmers' dedication to water conservation, limited pesticide use, and a low-waste footprint. Through partnership with the IPM Institute of North America, we established a program that enable growers to produce top quality fruit, while reducing their ecosystem impact. Today, the TruEarth program™ encompasses all our growers in the Mississippi River Valley Region, and we are ready for more.

As a brand, we recognize the need for further action, both for the health of our world and the sustainability of our business. In order to take make this necessary change, we have partnered with the Sustainable Food Group, an organization dedicated to making positive environmental shifts in the food system and supply chain. Together, we have created a sustainability plan with five focus areas: climate, food waste, growing practices, packaging, and pollinators. In doing so, we hope to become part of the transparent and rapid change needed to heal our planet. Each of these focus areas not only has global impact but is an essential part of the long-term health of the agricultural industry, speaking to their importance.

Continue reading for a brief description, timeline, and the deliverables of each goal.

Climate

Greenhouse gas emissions have begun to warm the world at an alarming rate, impacting both global climate and localized weather patterns. Apple production is inherently tied to climate and weather, and drastic shifts overtime may lead to unpredictable shifts in crop productivity. Without a reduction in global emissions, we may lose the ability to produce crops in some areas and will add additional stress to our natural resources such as water. Agricultural production, though dependent on steady climate patterns, currently produces 10% of global greenhouse gases making this problem worse. Therefore, we aim to:

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% in Honeybear Brands' operations by 2030, while simultaneously sourcing 100% of our facility electricity from renewable sources by 2025, and eventually achieving brand-wide carbon neutrality by 2040.

Key Shifts:

- Conducting energy audits at each facility in order to identify opportunity for energy use reduction.
- Enrolling in renewable sourcing programs where available.
- Installing on-site renewables where alternative sourcing programs do not exist.
- Exploring opportunity for lower emissions vehicles and equipment across our facilities and transportation sector.

- Invest in offsets to mitigate any remaining fossil fuel usage.

Transitioning to renewable not only offers a more energy secure future as the market shifts but protects the environment which enables us to produce high-quality fruit. In addition, it fuels a market shift in sourcing that is essential to the end of fossil fuel dependency. Food is a necessity, and the environment to grow that food is as well. This goal stands to protect this fundamental resources.

Deliverables:

- Complete energy audit to determine baseline usage by 2020.
- Complete enrollment in renewable sourcing programs by 2025.
- Complete on-site renewable energy installation by 2025.
- Complete 15% emissions reduction by 2030.
- Complete transition to carbon neutrality by 2040.

Food Waste

Fresh produce is regularly wasted in the US, as 52% is not consumed. This not only uses a copious amount of resources such as water, fertilizer, cropland, and landfill space, but contributes to a food system that leaves many underfed. Falling into this category, apples are often times wasted due to imperfections, market surplus, retail cull, and mismanagement of bad fruit. Therefore, we aim to:

Achieve zero food waste (to landfill) from farm to retail by 2025.

Key shifts:

- Putting recording measures in place to effectively monitor flows of fruit in and out of our facilities.
- Working with local charities and food hubs to donate fruit for human consumption that is left over due to market surplus.
- Identify opportunity for culled fruit such as animal feed, compost, or materials.
- Collaborate with retailers to implement recycling and composting programs in addition to educational opportunities for consumers.

Limiting food waste where possible contributes to a better food system for all. It diverts fresh produce to those who may not have sufficient access while mitigating the environmental burden that comes with uneaten food.

Deliverables:

- Complete bi-yearly food waste audits in all production facilities.
- Complete transition to zero food waste by 2025.

Growing Practices

The overuse of pesticides and fertilizers has damaged the health of our soil, waterways, and pollinator habitat. After these precious resources are depleted, the need for pesticides and fertilizers becomes even higher, as ecosystems shift out of balance and can no longer provide plants with what they need. Apples, being a pollinator dependent fruit, are especially vulnerable to dips in pollinator populations. Therefore, we aim to:

Expand our TruEarth sustainable farming program to 90% of our orchards by 2025 while transitioning 75% of TruEarth growers to advanced pollinator practices.

Key shifts:

- Updating the TruEarth protocol to place more value on pollinator habitat that includes floral resources and nesting sites, while phasing pollinator protection practices in as minimum requirements.
- Collaborate with growers to identify challenges in transition along with solutions to those challenges.
- Survey pollinator abundance to better understand the impacts of pollinator protections and limited pesticide usage.
- Identify opportunity for pesticide alternatives.

The TruEarth program was developed in partnership with the Institute of Pest Management, leaders in science-based work to help protect the agricultural environment. The protocols and growing standards aim to protect pollinators, reduce growers' waste, and encourage sustainable farming practices. Through the implantation of this program across our source orchards, we should see an increase in pollinator habitat along with a healthier growing environment.

Deliverables:

- Complete updates to the TruEarth protocol by 2021.
- Complete transition of 90% of source orchards under the TruEarth program by 2025.
- Complete transition of 75% of TruEarth growers to advanced pollinator practices by 2025.

Packaging

As the retail environment has shifted towards single-use plastic packaging, we are seeing rates of pollution skyrocket. Not only is this packaging a pollutant to the physical environment, but it is sourced from fossil fuels, further contributing to the issue of climate change. Given apple production's dependency on clean water, a healthy environment, and dependable weather, the reduction of single use plastics from our environment and retail shelves is vital. Therefore, we aim to:

Use plastic-free packaging in all our branded products by 2030.

Key shifts:

- Pilot packaging alternatives with retailers to identify market opportunity.
- Work with packaging suppliers to develop new packaging models that both protect the fruit from facility to fork and offer a retail worthy aesthetic.
- Collaborate with retailers to create package introduction timelines that are both feasible and bold.
- Consider plastics not only in external packaging, but in PLU stickers and display items.
- Clearly label packaging to support the highest likelihood of correct consumer disposal.

In reducing our plastic footprint, we will alleviate the overall burden that plastic packaging poses to the environment. Meanwhile, we will bolster the already promising shift towards plastic alternatives in the marketplace, and most notably, in the produce world.

Deliverables:

- Complete set of alternative offerings for branded packaging by 2025.
- Complete transition to plastic-free PLU stickers by 2025.
- Complete transition to plastic-free packaging across all branded products by 2030.

Pollinators

Pollinators are an essential part of apple production. Without them, it is close to impossible to effectively germinate trees. In recent years, the collapse of both honeybee populations and the downfall of wild pollinator species has led to an environmental crisis. Without intervention, we will quickly lose our ability to produce food. Habitat loss and pesticide use are the two major drivers of pollinator collapse. Therefore, we aim to:

Install 50 acres of pollinator habitat across the nation by 2025, while simultaneously implementing pollinator conservation practices on 100% of our US source orchards.

Key shifts:

- Updating the TruEarth protocol to place more value on pollinator habitat that includes floral resources and nesting sites, and phase pollinator protection practices in as minimum requirements.
- Expand pollinator protections to all our US source orchards, even those that are not currently within the TruEarth program.
- Partnering with NGOs, growers, and retailers around the country to find land and funds available for habitat installation.
- Completing annual orchard audits to determine pollinator abundance both before and after habitat installation.

Introduction of pollinator habitat on orchard sites not only provides pollinators more space to thrive, but offers orchards an additional source of pollination, bolstering crop success. Moreover, installations in more public facing areas, such as retail locations, offer educational opportunities for customers and retailers alike. In turn, we can foster a deeper understanding of the food system, connecting the dots from bee, to tree, to me.

Deliverables:

- Complete pollinator abundance surveys in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- Complete 50 acres of habitat installation by 2024.
- Complete transition of 75% of source orchards to advanced pollinator practices.

Contact

Please feel free to reach out with any follow-up questions or comments on our sustainability goals.

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