

### 3 Actions to Advance Sustainability in Agriculture

The climate crisis has the potential to threaten lives and incur incalculable damage—much of which people have already begun to see—and unfortunately, time is no longer running out to solve for climate change—time is *already* out. Feeding new and growing populations responsibly and sustainably is one of the world’s most pressing challenges, and policy-makers and companies big and small are asking what they can do to secure the future of food and agriculture. Luckily, advancements in agrifood have the potential to both sustain the environment and provide economic growth that will both lift countries and people out of poverty while conserving natural resources. But where to start?

The world is depending on the agricultural system to meet the demands of the future, and private- and public-sector representatives have the power to meet the challenge. Based on insights gathered from some of THRIVE’s most influential agrifood leaders, here are a few guiding principles to impact real change in advancing sustainability:

#### 1. Keep it farmer-focused

“Take it to the farmer,” was the quote Sarah Boettiger, Head of Global Public Affairs, Science & Sustainability at Bayer Crop Science chose to cite from Norman Borlaug, the “Father of the Green Revolution,” when asked about how to achieve sustainability. Farmers are the ones who are at ground zero and have the most valuable experience when it comes to validating new innovations and policy. The incomparable insights they provide will be the strongest indicator of whether or not a new solution is effective or adoptable. Simple as that!

#### 2. Collaborate across sectors

Big problems like climate change are not resolved in silos—the reach and tools of the public sector and the know-how and agility of the private sector are stronger together. “Governments alone cannot solve these problems and we’ve seen what pulling together the best of both worlds, as well as NGOs and other stakeholders, can bring to the table in terms of finding solutions,” said Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. It’ll take private sector partnerships, national governments, and a global multi-stakeholder approach to mobilize billions of dollars in investment and incentives and produce positive outcomes and bold ideas in climate-smart agriculture. In the end, accessibility and alignment between entrepreneurs, farmers, policy-makers, private sector partners, academics, and scientific organizations will be what determines the success of sustainability.

#### 3. Think globally

It’s about the whole planet and its people. “Entrepreneurs often focus on a very individualized or geographical market opportunity, but it’s important not to lose sight of the constructs and challenges that the global community is trying to solve,” said Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director General at the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Everyone has a stake in

the success of sustainability, so it is better to set sights on scaled benefits and learnings that can be so much more impactful to the world than solutions customized for just one region.

These steps can make a big impact on advancing sustainability and are already being practiced across the world. The European Green Deal, the Biden Administration's priorities, and U.N. summits that bring together thought leaders across sectors will be shaping decisions in the coming years. Markets, trade, national policies, and central banks are all integrating climate risk into their growth plans. Progress has not moved fast enough, but there's real momentum happening now created by people and systems coming together. Let's make sure the momentum isn't lost by continuing to think locally and act globally.

This article was compiled by the THRIVE team in collaboration with influential agrifood leaders, highlighting the importance of agriculture in our future sustainability efforts.