The National Corn Growers Association:
Sustainability Progress & Commitment

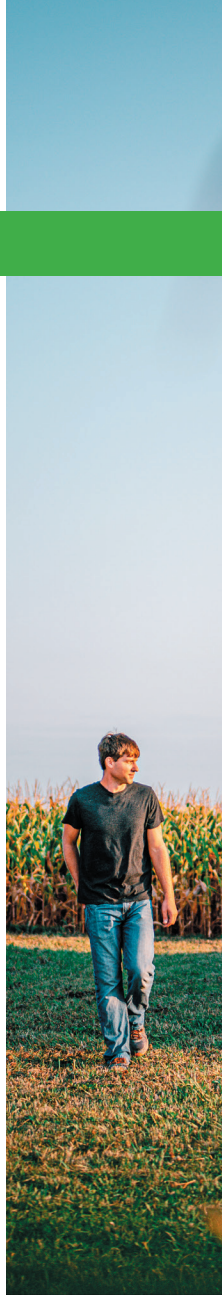
CORN SUSTAINABILITY STORY

As the largest sector in American agriculture, corn farmers impact hundreds of thousands of jobs, infuse billions of dollars into the economy and care for our most critical resources, all while seeing substantial improvement in production. The corn industry's evolution in sustainability, the documented environmental, economic and social improvements over the last several decades, point back to a farmer's willingness to embrace change.

ENVIRONMENTAL
PRODUCING MORE WITH LESS

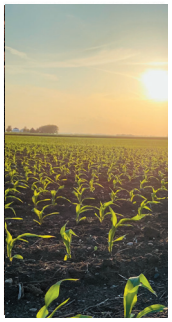
SOCIAL
PROVIDING A SAFE, SECURE SUPPLY OF FOOD, FEED AND FUEL

ECONOMIC
LARGEST AG SECTOR, CREATING JOBS AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE GDP



A COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

Corn farmers' commitment to the pillars of sustainability have paved the way for improvements in a number of key indicators over a span of several decades. Between 1980 and 2015[1], corn farmers have:

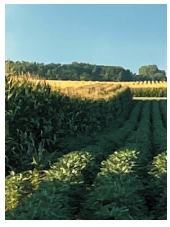


REDUCED SOIL LOSS PER ACRE BY

58%

IMPROVED IRRIGATION EFFICIENCIES, LEADING TO PER BUSHEL DECLINES IN IRRIGATION WATER USE OF

46%



DECREASED THE AMOUNT OF LAND REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A BUSHEL OF CORN BY

41%

IMPROVED ENERGY USE EFFICIENCY PER BUSHEL BY

41%

REDUCED GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS PER BUSHEL BY

31%

Source: Field to Market Indicators Report, 2016

MANAGEMENT WITHIN A FARM'S ECOSYSTEM

Embracing numerous advancements in technology over many decades, farmers continue to grow more with less.

SOIL CONSERVATION

Healthy soils are the foundation of all agriculture production and are why corn farmers are committed to leaving their land in a better place than they found it. Adoptions in conservation tillage and other soil conservation strategies have contributed to a reduction in soil erosion.

WATER STEWARDSHIP

Farmers recognize the invaluable role water plays in raising a crop each year. They also recognize that they must actively protect this resource for the benefit of their crops, their communities and the planet.

ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE

With approximately 90 million acres planted annually, corn is grown in a variety of unique ecosystems. Supporting the health of those ecosystems requires active attention from farmers, who respond by using integrated pest management techniques, establishing wildlife habitat on their lands and more.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Technology that makes farmers more productive has also helped to reduce the amount of energy, and subsequent emissions, needed for corn production. Corn farmers also provide a carbon reduction strategy through the production of ethanol and the support of the Renewable Fuel Standard.

MINIMAL WASTE

With corn's flexibility and number of uses, little from each kernel goes to waste. From animal feed to ethanol production to bioplastics, the components of each kernel of corn find a home in a variety of ways and uses, leaving little behind.

WHAT'S NEXT?

While proud of their past success, corn farmers are not ready to stop there. They stand ready to meet the needs of the future and to continue to embrace the change that has brought them this far. Looking to 2030, corn farmers are committed to:

INCREASE LAND USE EFFICIENCY BY

12%

REDUCE SOIL EROSION BY

13%

INCREASE IRRIGATION WATER USE EFFICIENCY BY

15%

INCREASE ENERGY USE EFFICIENCY BY

13%

REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS BY

13%

[1] *Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, 2016. Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators for Measuring Outcomes of On Farm Agricultural Production in the United States (Third Edition)*