

Progress Report

# Advanta

SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS





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# | Our commitment

## Sustainable agriculture & food security

Advanta Seeds, part of UPL Group, is committed to sustainability and contributing to UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The focus of Advanta Seeds are smallholder farmers who grow 80% of food for communities in Africa, Asia and South America, and most often suffer from hunger and poverty.

## Sustainable lifestyle

Advanta Seeds actively promotes sustainable lifestyles by encouraging its employees, business partners and communities to engage in sustainable lifestyles and take actions to reduce our environmental footprint.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

 <p><b>1 NO POVERTY</b></p>	<p><b>No Poverty</b></p> <p>Providing high quality seeds to smallholder farmers to improve their prosperity, social and economic status.</p>	 <p><b>2 ZERO HUNGER</b></p>	<p><b>Zero Hunger</b></p> <p>Increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable food production. Enhancing smallholder farmers' productivity and growing more nutritional food.</p>
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UPL is a signatory for the World Business Council for Sustainable Development



# Engaging community

We actively engage our employees and community to create sustainability awareness and promote sustainable lifestyles. At Advanta we listen to our employees and collect feedback from our community to understand what issues are the most pressing that we can address as a company.

We conducted an employee survey to find out how Advanta employees understand sustainability and what actions they take to reduce their environmental footprint. Additionally many employees shared in the survey ideas for sustainable actions that they believe we should take to promote sustainable agriculture.

Almost half of Advanta employees believe sustainability is a long-term view and our actions today affect future generations. Nearly 64% of Advanta employees are already familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The survey revealed that 31% of the employees are engaged in sustainable actions and a majority feel strongly about Advanta making sustainability a priority.

Our goal is to create UN SDGs awareness and engage 100% of our employees in sustainable actions by 2021.

For agricultural impact the key issues raised were educating farmers about the use of fertilizers, increasing natural and organic soil nourishment and preserving a natural ecosystem.

Reducing water and energy use, and recycling were among the most frequently referred actions taken by individual employees.

*"I live in an apartment where I am a treasurer. Three years ago, I convinced 40 apartment owners in the complex to install a rainwater harvesting system where run off from our roof is channelled to a percolation tank and then into a nearby borewell. Otherwise, rainwater simply goes into the drains. We also ensure that there is no littering around and educate people wherever we notice such actions," shared one of the Advanta employees in the survey.*

## Sustainable actions engaged by our employees



Recycling  
20%



Planting greenery & trees  
16%



Reduce water use  
8%



Reducing plastic use  
15%



Solar Power use  
6%



Encourage others to be more sustainable  
5%



# Making an impact

Our sustainability focus and commitment resonates throughout the company to embed sustainability into our DNA. We encourage every employee at Advanta to make a difference and live a more sustainable life.



“ I believe a true impact can be created by all of us, individually, by taking small steps every day and think how we grow, share, and consume our food. How we can minimize our environmental footprint. I believe every member of the Advanta team can make an impact and inspire others. ”

Bhupen, Global CEO Advanta Seeds

In each Advanta region from Australia to South America we hosted town halls in local languages to communicate the new focus and direction to become a truly sustainable business. At the town halls, our leaders made a strong call for action and signed a sustainability pledge to show their commitment to Advanta strategy and to encourage employees to make their individual commitments as well.

The teams were eager to take actions instantly. For example, our South Asia team signed a pledge to never use plastic again.

To empower Advanta employees we provided everyone with a toolkit detailing information on the UN SDG and Advanta sustainability directions, a personal sustainability pledge and a customized UN SDGs lapel pin. In some regions employees also received water bottles and ceramic cups to stop using plastic.

The sustainability town halls brought a lot of enthusiasm and eagerness to take actions.

Advanta’s sustainable direction is part of its parent company UPL’s sustainable strategy focused on contributing the UN SDGs.

UPL has been addressing the global challenges of food security, climate change and environmental degradation proactively with a long-term sustainability strategy.



Sustainability Town Hall in Kiev, Ukraine with participation of Bhupen, Advanta Global CEO and Advanta Global Management Team.



Advanta employees in Nairobi, Kenya signing their own sustainability pledge.

# Technology for climate change

With changing climate smallholder farmers face new challenges that require tailored solutions. At Advanta Seeds, we aim to provide innovation and seeds technology to address the most challenging issues.

## Responding to farmers needs

The major crop for many smallholder farmers across the world is corn. In recent years, corn growers in tropical geographies of South America, Asia and Africa have struggled with emerging warm pests as a result of changing biodiversity.

We took an active approach, and in partnership with CIAT circulated the warm pest identification guide. The guide proved to be an excellent tool for growers to improve corn crops.

To promote the guide, we arranged many presentations with the CIAT expert for the Colombian and Bolivian agronomists and farmers. Disseminating the guide helped many farmers to save the crop from infestation. We are planning to circulate this publication in other tropical geographies.



CIAT expert, Jairo Rodríguez Chalarca, giving a presentation on warm pests.

## Climate Smart Crops

In Africa, South America and Asia, temperatures are rising drastically drying out crop fields. We actively promote crops that are naturally drought resistant and perform well in harsher climates. Sorghum is one of these crops.

In Africa under the program Climate Smart Africa, we work with FAO and Farm Africa to introduce to farmers sorghum crops in place of corn which is a less productive in a changing climate. Our sorghum hybrid PAC 501 demonstrated outstanding performance and a stable yield in this region. PAC 501 will be promoted in 180 field demos across 64 villages in Tanzania. The farmers will have an opportunity to learn about sorghum benefits and best agronomy practices to boost productivity.



Tanzanian farmer in PAC 501 Sorghum field

## Applying new technologies

We work closely with our parent company UPL to use new technologies that provide climate change solutions to improve crops for smallholder farmers.

One of the revolutionary UPL eco-friendly technologies is ZEBa which improves soil capacity and productivity and allows to save 20% of water.

We provided ZEBa for okra growers to test this technology in vegetables. In India, ZEBa improved the seeds' germination, soil aeration and overall vigor and health of the crop. It also retained the soil moisture and reduce irrigation. This excellent result gave hope to many vegetable farmers in India where droughts are more frequent. ZEBa provides crop assurance even in dry conditions when water is scarce.



Without ZEBa (control)

With ZEBa

Testing ZEBa technology in okra field in India.



# Enhancing nutrition

Growing nutritional crops is essential to fight hunger and malnutrition. Most farmers in regions with food security challenges are smallholder farmers who lack resources and knowledge to be productive and to feed their families. We look for the best solutions and technology to improve nutritional value and provide high yielding crops.

## Promoting nutritional vegetables

We are focused on nutritional vegetables in tropical geographies in Africa, Asia and South America. One of the most nutritional vegetables in these regions is okra. Our research and innovation in okra has already benefited many farmers. One of the most innovative product we have recently launched is Jaani okra in India. Jaani is highly tolerant to combinations of viruses and is high yielding. We made this technology accessible to smallholder farmers at no extra cost.

Additionally we launched a nutrition campaign on social media to promote the health benefits of okra. The campaign included an okra recipe book published and distributed for free to okra growers and their communities.



Jaani okra field in India

## Boosting health with vitamin A orange maize

In partnership with HarvestPlus, we launched biofortified vitamin A orange maize GV673A, with many health and agronomic benefits for farmers. The crop has a high amount of nutritious vitamin A essential for growth and development of children. The biofortification also makes the crop more drought and disease resistant.

GV673A launch is supported by Ministry of Agriculture and various NGO organizations in Zambia. The goal is to reach as many farmers and communities as possible who are in the need of nutritional food. We have planned 1000 field days to promote the nutritional and agronomy benefits of orange maize. This crop can substitute traditionally grown white maize offering more income to farmers and nutritional meals for their families.



Bbiofortified vitamin A orange maize GV673A

## Improving quality and production of milk

We proactively collaborate with local organizations to introduce forage crops for dairy livestock in Tanzania and Kenya. The forage sorghum tested by the local growers demonstrated better quality and higher milk production.

The forage crop is being highly adopted by the individual farmers as well as the dairy co-operatives. Currently we are working with local NGOs to promote forage crops to improve the milk production and nutrition for the local communities. To introduce the forage crops we have already planned 50 field days to reach 100,000 farmers in Tanzania. The farmers will be able to learn how to grow forages and how to prepare animal feed.



A field demonstration for Sugargraze forage sorghum in Tanzania.

# | Adding value

Adding value to smallholder farmers is to go beyond seeds and provide opportunities that can significantly improve their livelihood. Advanta Seeds is actively exploring the food production value chain to add value to smallholder farmers.

## Engaging value chain partners

We recognize that providing farmers with opportunities to sell crops is as important as providing high-quality seeds. Smallholder farmers do not have bargaining power to secure fair market prices and buyers for their crops.

We actively look for partners in the food value chain to extend the support to farmers and ensure their income.

In Thailand we have an MOU agreement with Betagro Feed Mill (Silo) and seven Provincial Agricultural Governments to promote corn and guarantee a fair purchase price for the farmers. This partnership already impacts over 33,000 smallholder farmers. The successful collaboration inspired another agreement with Sunsweet Ltd for the development of sweet corn varieties for the processing industry. This scheme impacts over 15,000 smallholder farmers in northern Thailand.



Advanta Thailand (Pacific Seeds Ltd) and Sunsweet Ltd signing the agreement on sweetcorn development project.

## Securing farmers income through value chain

We joined with East African Breweries in Kenya to provide sustainable income for the smallholder farmers. This relationship has been benefiting local farmers for the past few years offering them regular and guaranteed income.

Our highly performing sorghum hybrids such as ADV23012 gained the trust of the brewery and the farmers who moved from traditionally grown crops to sorghum. Our grain sorghum hybrids perform well even in dry conditions and are less risky crops to grow for the smallholder farmers, whose livelihood depends on the crop performance. We offer training and field demonstrations where farmers can learn how to grow sorghum and maximize crop productivity.

Farmers who participate in the scheme receive a farming contract from the brewery with guaranteed prices for the grain. This allows them to have stable income.



Grain sorghum field day in Kenya.

## Empowering farmers with new technologies

Every year, Africa exports over \$35 billion worth of agriculture produce. Some of it travels to the UAE which imports about 80% of its food. The Meet the Farmer Conference is designed to drive business partnerships between Africa and the GCC region. The conference aims to improve bilateral trade and drive technology innovation in agriculture.

We were awarded the “Best Innovative Company” at the 2019 Meet the Farmers Conference. The award recognizes the impact Advanta’s technologies are making on smallholder farmers productivity in Africa. The highly performing hybrids from sunflower, sorghum to vegetables allow smallholder farmers to be more productive.

Higher productivity of farmers and growing more food benefits the neighboring region such as the GCC which relies heavily on imported food.

Advanta Seeds Award received at the 2019 Meet the Farmers Conference.







**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

Advanta Seeds supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).  
To find our more go to: [www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org](http://www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org)

[www.advantaseeds.com](http://www.advantaseeds.com)

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