

Sustainability and Agronomy Assistant | *Brittany Lacasse*
 “Watch It Grow”

About Holmes Agro

- Holmes Agro is an agricultural crop inputs retailer, supplying products and services in the areas of seed, fertilizer, crop protection and agronomic advice.
- Holmes Agro is committed to **developing, implementing, and demonstrating** sustainable practices to help **reduce environmental impacts** in our community, and is committed to growers in helping them achieve the same goals.



What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Focus of Sustainable Agriculture and Holmes Agro Sustainability Policy

- Overarching ethics, stability, and resilience.
- Ecosystem and natural resource conservation, and productive capacity.
- The ability to produce crops and livestock starts with a healthy soil, management of the soil for conservation and fertility is vital.
- Cultural preservation, equity, fairness, fulfillment of human needs, and working conditions.
- Development of thriving economy and supply of products.

Key Takeaways

- Creating sustainability goals and targets for an industry that is so diverse is challenging due to scale and knowledge.
- Communication will be a significant factor in communicating agriculture practices that improve sustainability, allowing companies and farmers to share their information.
- Environmental sustainability is emphasized in agriculture, while the social and economic pillars are underrepresented or not openly discussed.

Top Sustainability Initiatives in Agriculture



Role and Responsibilities

- Researched and developed an **industry benchmarking analysis of agricultural retailers** and Holmes Agro raw material suppliers.
- Identified **key performance indicators** for future goals and targets to analyze progress.
- Established a **sustainability baseline** for Holmes Agro to understand what sustainability means to employees, suppliers, and customers through sustainability questionnaires.
- Created a **plan to align with current business strategy** to integrate specific sustainability goals to improve their operations excellence, people performance, customer focus, and use of technology pillars.
- Developed **sustainability journey of goals, targets, and recommendations over two, five, and ten years** for all locations to address areas of improvements in environmental stewardship, social well-being, and financial success.
- Initial establishment of an **internal sustainability policy**.
- Agronomy team scout working with horticulture growers to measure pest pressure **to create pesticide and fertilizer application schedules**.



Industry Challenges

- Consumer pressure is a challenge, with misguided information readily available. It makes it difficult to transparent the on-farm facts, environmental impacts, and current actions to improve efficiencies while protecting the environment.
- Currently, there is a lack of knowledge understanding the logistics and day-to-day reality of the time, material, finances, and challenges to satisfy the increasing global food demand.
- Individual sector adoption of sustainable systems and practices to meet current criteria and changes is good; however, awareness is often poor.
- Adopting new technology is expensive and considered high risk for farmers financially and potential impact on yields. Leaving the economic pressure on farmers resulting in a barrier to entry and difficult for smaller farmers to raise the necessary capital.