

Sustainability of US Peanut Production

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Sustainable production of agricultural commodities has moved to the forefront due to changing demographics and traits desired by consumers. Gen-Z and Millennials now comprise 46% of the current US population and these groups are twice as likely (75% vs 34%) to change purchase patterns to reduce their impact of the environment. Data further indicates that age isn't the only factor as 60% of American consumers are in the "Sustainable Mainstream" category (Nielson Natural Marketing Institute's Segmentation Study). The sustainable footprint of US peanuts is related to numerous positive inherent properties of peanuts as well as proactive industry and research initiatives. To document the sustainability of US peanut production, a nationwide study of peanut producers was conducted during the 2016-2019 crop years. Numerous metrics were analyzed including, but not limited to: land use efficiency, water use efficiency, greenhouse gases, energy efficiency, management practices, pesticide and fertilizer usage, technology adoption, and other sustainability related metrics. Compared to other previous studies (UNESCO (1996-2005) and USDA-ARMS (1999, 2004, and 2013)), continual significant improvements in the sustainable footprint of US peanut production are demonstrated. The survey data also provides opportunities for educational purposes to inform consumers and highlight practices that lead to improved sustainable practices and economic returns for producers.