

Documenting the Sustainability of U.S. Peanut Production

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From the year 2000 up to 2021, average U.S. peanut yields increased by nearly 70%. In the same period, cropland planted to peanuts has fluctuated between 1.07 to 1.87 million acres, with over 1.4 million acres planted to peanuts in 16 out of the last 22 years. From 1.63 million tons in 2000 to 3.19 million tons in 2021, national peanut production has surpassed U.S. peanut consumption levels. Consequently, a significant share of U.S. peanuts needs to be placed in the world markets, where there is competition from several peanut-producing countries in terms of volume and quality.

American Peanut Council (APC), the umbrella organization for the U.S. peanut industry, has assessed peanut market signals in the sustainability space for over a decade. In 2022, APC launched a comprehensive sustainability framework to document and verify the sustainability outcomes of U.S. peanut production. These outcomes will be used to develop industry messages to share with peanut buyers to protect and expand markets for American-grown peanuts. In addition, the sustainability framework serves as a tool for continuous improvement for peanut producers, where they can learn about recommended farm management practices of interest to peanut buyers and how to improve their environmental footprint over time.

The sustainability framework takes the form of an online platform where growers can answer a self-assessment about critical and recommended farm management practices, and where they can enter field-level data for fields representative of their peanut operations. The field-level data fulfills the requirements to run an analysis from the Fieldprint Platform, which calculates eight sustainability metrics based on farming practices. The environmental metrics include GHG Emissions, Energy Use, Soil Conservation, and Soil Carbon, among others.