

And they thought sustainability was a fad? Industry trends, pollinator laws and the farm bill.



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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Notes from My Office
Green Business Trends
Hort Industry Trends
Year of Plant Health
Pollinator Health Laws
Farm Bill Stuff

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Notes from the Home Office

People keep asking if I'm cold yet. Nope. But only because we have about 20 acres of dead trees and a wood stove. I'm keeping pretty toasty in the loft office as a result.

If nothing else, a cold snap is a good reminder that energy efficiencies matter. Regardless of trends, politics, climate, or anything else, it still matters to your wallet.

Ten years ago, a lot of people thought this sustainability thing was, well, just a fad. And my response was always that if nothing else, from an economics and resource management perspective, it was here to stay.

According to the latest report, corporate sustainability programs are also here to stay (see below).



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Green Business Trends

GreenBiz just released their [12th State of Green Business report](#), which takes a hard look at where corporate sustainability practices stand worldwide, as well as outlining a number of trends to watch for in 2019. It's worth a glance just to see how big corporations are doing on the sustainability front.

In 2017, 85% of S&P 500 companies published a sustainability report, up 20% from 2013.

They named 10 top trends to watch for:

- 1. Corporate sustainability programs are here to stay.** Sustainability and sustainability experts have permeated every part of operations—they don't just live in the “sustainability department” now.
- 2. Reuse is making a comeback.** More companies are giving things a second life—be it packaging or excess materials.
- 3. Soil quality.** Yes, you read that right. Greenbiz says soil quality is getting increasing attention in the sustainability world. They see more companies—both those in agriculture and those who indirectly impact soil quality through their sourcing—investing in healthy soil. Why? Well, the Earth is losing fertile soil at a staggering rate—and that's bad for the food chain and the climate. Who's doing it? General Mills, Land O'Lakes, Patagonia and the Soil Health Institute, which has several multinational corporations it works with.
- 4. Corporations acting on deforestation.**
- 5. Electric buses and trucks are on the rise.**
- 6. Companies doubling down on energy production.**
- 7. Green and sustainability loans.** Companies with good sustainability metrics are getting lower lending rates with these special loans.
- 8. Super pollutants becoming more important.** Greenbiz sees a bigger effort being made to deal with greenhouse gases such as methane, CFCs and HFCs.
- 9. Climate-risk disclosure taking investors by storm.** More companies are disclosing data related to climate risk, and investors are paying attention. Plus 58 stock exchanges now have environmental listing requirements.
- 10. Science-based targets that look beyond carbon.** Organizations are coming together to set goals for reducing environmental impacts on water, land use and biodiversity.



More Trends ... This Time In Our Industry

The folks at Ball Publishing have been on the road this year, and guess the one trend they keep noticing across the board? Sustainability and nature.

At IPM Essen in Germany, Chris Beytes said:

Sustainability and the use of natural materials rule. Recycling, organics, paper, glass. Lots of glass! Terrariums, jars, bottles. Plastic is still widely used, but there are more and more bio-options, such as a biodegradable pot made of waste sunflower shells. One bedding plant grower is testing Ellepots sold in four-count fiber trays (they've dubbed them "Friendlies"); while orchid grower Stolk Flora is replacing 10 plastic sleeves with one large paper wrapper when shipping a tray of orchids to retailers.

At TPIE in Florida, Ellen Wells reported:

You've heard this before: People are aligning their values with nature, becoming part of the solution to the problems of waste and disconnectedness with the environment. We're aligning our

brain frequencies to nature through Forest Bathing, and if we can't get out into nature, we create indoor jungles. I like all of that. And our industry does play a big role in that process.

Hungry for More Trends?

Ball Publishing just did a [webinar](#) on retail trends that's free. *Green Profit* editors Ellen Wells and Jen Polanz talked with Proven Winners' Jessica DeGraaf and Meghan Owens to cover "Five Trending Marketing Tips for IGCs."

And *GrowerTalks* also has a video available of all the cool plants and products they found at TPIE. View it [HERE](#).



The Year of Plant Health

Looking ahead to 2020, the United Nations is designating it the International Year of Plant Health. For a minute there, I thought they might have meant how plants impact human health. But not quite. They're actually talking about plant health the same way greenhouse growers think about it: protecting plants from pests and diseases.

"The International Year of Plant Health is a key initiative to highlight the importance of plant health to enhance food security, protect the environment and biodiversity, and boost economic development," International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretary Jingyuan Xia said. "Despite the increasing impact of plant pests, resources are scarce to address the problem. We hope this new International Year of Plant Health will trigger greater global collaboration to support plant health policies at all levels, which will contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Agenda."

According to [the press release](#), the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and IPPC will be spearheading a number of activities on plant health throughout 2020, including an International Plant Health Congress.

Legislating Pollinator Health

With all the buzz over pollinator health in the last few years, there's been a flurry of activity in U.S. state legislatures trying to help out pollinators. Until recently, no one had calculated just how many. Researchers at the University of Missouri, however, stepped up and [analyzed the new policies](#).

Only four bills were passed in the last 17 years that addressed pollinator health at the federal level. At the state level, 209 bills were passed in 36 states. Moreover, the researchers also gathered information on the types of policies set forth. "[Insect pollinator conservation policy innovations: lessons for lawmakers](#)," was published in *Environmental Science and Policy*.

How'd the Farm Bill Do on Sustainability?

As the components of the 2018 Farm Bill start to take effect, the question is how sustainable agriculture will be affected. For a little light reading, head over to the [National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's website](#) for a series of blog posts on the topic. They break down the bill's impact of working lands conservation, local/regional food programs, nutrition programs and more.

Until next time,



Jennifer Duffield White

jwhite@ballpublishing.com

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