

Scaling up sustainability in **lemons**



What was *the market situation?*

CITRUSVIL is one of the largest producers, processors and exporters of lemons and derivative products in the world. With plantations throughout the Argentinian province of Tucumán, it has 7,875 ha to its name. In total, its 23 productive units output around 260,000 tonnes of lemons per year, employing more than 4,500 workers during harvest season, from March to September. The company allocates these fruits to its industrial complex for producing fresh fruit and industrial derivatives such as essential oils, concentrated juices, and dehydrated peel, which are in highly demanded within the Food and Beverages / Flavors & Fragrances markets. Additionally, CITRUSVIL is known for championing high standards of sustainability. It was the first citrus company in the world to produce biogas from its citrus effluents. In the last decade, it generated 20%

energy savings in its industrial plants by replacing fossil gas with biogas in its boilers. Since 2019, it has produced 3MW of renewable electric energy that is fed back to the grid, providing enough energy to power around 2,500 average Argentine homes. The Zero effluent program ensures that effluent which could have otherwise ended up in contact with natural water supplies is used for fertirrigation of around 600 ha of lemon plantations. It has also enabled the preservation of 5,700 ha of land as forestry. The orchards CITRUSVIL operates are certified by GLOBALG.A.P., GLOBALG.A.P., GRASP, and Sedex-SMETA standards. Its production systems are designed to embody good agricultural practice and achieve a balance between productivity, profitability, environmental care, and workers' health.

What were *the challenges?*

Sustainability is not a one-off initiative. It is a process of constant innovation and improvement – particularly when we consider that retailers' sustainability requirements are rapidly becoming more stringent in the food and beverage market. The need for sustainable production extends to all links in the food chain, and we cannot afford to miss anybody out. To achieve joined-up sustainability, growers needed to be on-boarded with sustainable production principles, and achieve certification themselves. In fact, CITRUSVIL helps to raise the standard of primary production in the region. There is a large community of medium- and small-scale producers in the province of Tucumán – and CITRUSVIL collaborates with them to achieve the high (and increasing) standards required by the market. To achieve this goal, a joined-up partnership approach is required. In addition, CITRUSVIL facilitates access to new knowledge, emphasizing good agricultural practices that benefit farmers, food supply chain stakeholders, and consumers.



What was *the solution?*

CITRUSVIL partnered with Bayer to deliver training to small- and medium-sized producers through the BayG.A.P. service program. This includes a wide variety of content that is relevant to the producers: risk assessment and management planning, integrated pest management, irrigation systems, safety, residue management, safety in the use of equipment, plant protection products, application technologies, and document traceability. In 2021 (the first year of the partnership), the Technical Manager for BayG.A.P. in the Southern Cone ran training modules on Integrated Pest Management, Selection of Phytosanitary Products, Food Safety, and Safety with Phytosanitary Products. They also used demonstration plots to show the producers how they could adopt good agricultural practices in real-world conditions.

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“We believe it is important to stay up to date on the different requirements in terms of safety and in terms of product applications both at harvest and post-harvest. Certification is a very important topic that affects all of us and our ability to export our produce. These types of training activity really make a difference.”

// Juan Martini, grower, FEM Fruit



TUCUMÁN



What did *we achieve*?

The first stage of the roll-out is complete, with an intake of 18 producers from Tucumán. The training has equipped all 33 participants with essential knowledge and helped them to reframe the way they view sustainable practices as central to their activities. The participants, who were enthusiastic about continuing on their sustainability journeys, were positive about the quality of the training, describing it as a convenient, practical, and accessible way of bringing them together to get aligned on standards. For 2022, as well as expanding the program's intake, the partnership's aim is to keep working with the same producers to take them further to achieve the GLOBALG.A.P. certification and complete the associated social practices module, GLOBALG.A.P. GRASP.

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“The opportunity to partner with Bayer came at a key moment when we were looking to scale up this initiative, promoting better practices among medium- and small-scale producers from Tucumán. Promoting sustainable development across the region, and sharing knowledge of best production practices, are part of our regular community engagement efforts. The producers have been truly receptive and have shown a real appetite to learn. The market requires good agricultural practices throughout the value chain and this program provides great opportunities to meet this need.”

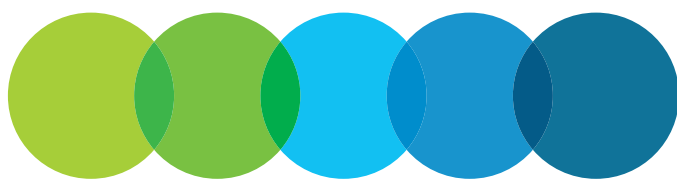
// Agustina Lucci, Sustainability Manager of CITRUSVIL

“This training is very important to me. It allows us to tackle issues together, and to see where the topic of certifications is headed. When we sell to the international market, it is very important to be in compliance with all current regulations. Companies like CITRUSVIL, who strive for excellence, are connecting us to this kind of session as part of a GLOBALG.A.P. pathway, which are essential for producers, for CITRUSVIL, and for the region.”

// Claudio Trapani, grower, Trapani y Cía

About Food Chain Partnership

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. The Crop Science Division of Bayer has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



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