



**Above:** WPGVA Director of Promotions & Consumer Education Dana Rady participates in a controlled burn on Healthy Grown land in Wisconsin.

# Healthy Grown Integrates into National Sustainability Programs

Program helps growers use research-based production and Integrated Pest Management protocols

By Deana Knuteson, Ph.D., Healthy Grown and Wisconsin ag sustainability programs

The award winning Healthy Grown® potato and vegetable sustainability program has been certifying high bar potatoes and vegetables in Wisconsin for 20 years!

Since its inception, Healthy Grown has helped farmers use research-based production and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) protocols, manage inputs and enhance ecosystem conservation efforts.

Healthy Grown standards include potatoes, carrots and onions. Participating farmers certify their whole operations by implementing landscape-level restoration practices on non-production lands and providing certified value in

restoration of non-agricultural farmlands, including wetlands, prairies, forests or other habitats.

This unique grower-based program promotes agricultural sustainability and enhances environmental farming while putting Wisconsin growers in a position to capture the expanding consumer demand for sustainable options in the marketplace.

The program has provided opportunities for certified growers while also creating positive recognition for the whole Wisconsin vegetable industry.

These outcomes are laudable and give promise to our local markets by providing locally based, valuable

solutions developed by our research and outreach teams in collaboration with growers.

But, does Healthy Grown fit into the larger, national sustainability picture?

National sustainability programs are becoming popular as supply chain partners are increasingly wanting to source products from growers that can document improvements in certain criteria.

## SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA

Agricultural sustainability focuses on economic, environmental and social criteria.

While the specific definition of sustainability varies to include people, the planet and profit, combining to make up the “triple bottom line,” emphasis is always on the environmental, economic and social components of sustainability.

To address agricultural suitability



solutions, programs are looking at how to calculate and track progress along the sustainability continuum and how they can verify that continual improvements are being made on farms.

Specific programs like Field To Market (<https://fieldtomarket.org/>), the Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops (<https://www.stewardshipindex.org/>) and the LEAF program (Linking Environment and Farming, <https://leafuk.org/>) have developed online tools to help track farming systems.

Others like the Cool Farm Tool (<https://coolfarmtool.org/>) have created programmatic metrics to track sustainability.

Some retailers have developed their own sustainability assessments, such as Walmart's Sustainability Index (<https://corporate.walmart.com/global-responsibility/environment-sustainability/sustainability-index-leaders-shop>), the Sustainability

Consortium (<https://www.sustainabilityconsortium.org/>) or Pepsico (<https://www.pepsico.com/sustainability/esg-topics-a-z#agriculture>), which is seeking sustainably sourced products, including potatoes.

The potato industry itself is looking to advance and document changes on the ground with the Potato Sustainability Alliance (PSA, <https://potatosustainability.org/>), which was re-launched in December of 2019 to advance new ideas and metrics to help growers document their on-farm practice adoption.

Traceability, the ability to track product from seed to table, is also encouraged in the marketplace and is becoming more important in the big-data approaches for sustainability.

#### BUSINESS INCENTIVES

Incentives are also being developed to encourage sustainability adoption. These "awards" may be in the



**Above:** The Healthy Grown® potato and vegetable sustainability program has been certifying high bar potatoes and vegetables in Wisconsin for 20 years!

form of a premium for product, preferential buying, reduced insurance rates, recognition through public investments such as tax breaks or direct payments for practice adoption.

*continued on pg. 18*



***Baginski Farms***  
Antigo, WI

*Quality Growers of Foundation and Certified  
Seed Potatoes for Over 50 Years!*



**We handle our own line of clean  
and dependable late model trucks  
for all of your delivery needs.**

<u><b>Yellows:</b></u>	<u><b>Reds:</b></u>	<u><b>Russets:</b></u>	
Colomba	Red Norland	Norkotah #8	Burbank
<u><b>Whites:</b></u>	Dark Red Norland	Gold Rush	Mercury
Superior	Modoc	Silverton	
	Radley		



**WISCONSIN  
CERTIFIED  
SEED POTATOES**

**N3502 Hwy H • Antigo, WI 54409**

Office: 715-627-7753 • Fax: 715-623-5412 • [mike@baginskifarms.com](mailto:mike@baginskifarms.com)



**Ag Logistics Inc**  
DIVISION OF BAGINSKI FARMS



## Healthy Grown Integrates into National Sustainability Programs . . .

*continued from pg. 17*

For 20-plus years, Healthy Grown has worked to document and track changes on Wisconsin potato and vegetable farms and is a proven example of local solutions to on-farm sustainability challenges.

While Healthy Grown fits under the national sustainability frameworks, to stay relevant, the program must continue to evolve and add criteria, especially those focused on new and emerging issues.

An example of this continual progress occurred in 2020 when Healthy Grown added a new "Water Quantity/Quality and Nutrient Management Planning" module to address those issues.

This module focused on ways to increase efficiencies in water and nutrient management, while still maintaining economic viability.

It is intended as a farm-by-farm look at the intricacies and nuances of on-farm water and nutrient management and is based on a similar approach used for IPM adoption and pesticide risk assessments.

So, does Healthy Grown fit into the complex sustainability world? Of course, it does, as the program has developed a system to look at changes on the ground, tackle new issues and promote positive advances for the entire Wisconsin vegetable industry.

The evidence is clear that the program is moving the industry in the right direction, and we will continue to grow, keep innovating and work to enhance our sustainability program while promoting advances for the industry. **BCT**



Healthy Grown farmers certify their whole farming operation by implementing landscape-level restoration practices on their non-production lands and providing certified value in restoration of non-agricultural farmlands, including wetlands, prairies, forest or other habitats.



### INTRODUCING THE **All-New**

#### INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL TRUCK LINE-UP

FOCUSED ON BUILDING TRUCKS THAT KEEP YOU MOVING FORWARD



**CONTACT US TODAY FOR  
YOUR TRUCK RELATED NEEDS!**

**PLOVER.. (715)-344-2931**

**WAUSAU... (715)-845-2244**

**SALES ~ SERVICE ~ PARTS ~ TRUCK LEASE/RENTAL ~ FINANCE**