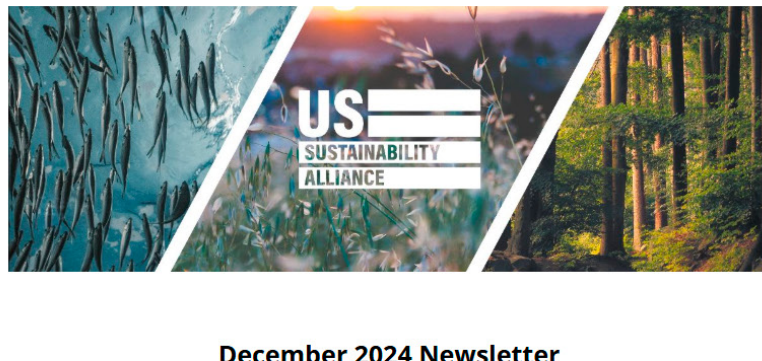


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December 2024 Newsletter

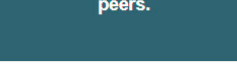
Hello and welcome to our final newsletter of 2024, which celebrates U.S. agriculture's latest sustainability achievements, from coffee to cotton.

We report from November's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), where Secretary Vilsack highlighted four years of historic investments and climate-smart progress, including almost \$40 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funding. We also feature an exclusive article from the Leather & Hide Council of America's Kevin Latner, discussing leather's role as a climate solution in line with a new Leather Manifesto.

Our other top stories include a climate-smart project revitalizing the Puerto Rican coffee industry and the continued success of the U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol sustainability program, which reports above-national-average environmental performance across six key metrics.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to sharing more sustainability news and views with you in 2025!

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Secretary Vilsack Highlights Historic Investments and Climate Progress at COP29

At the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack highlighted the advances made under the Biden-Harris Administration to position U.S. agriculture and forestry as climate leaders, develop climate solutions, and build climate-smart markets that help rural communities thrive. Secretary Vilsack said this progress would "leave a lasting legacy through a food and agricultural system that is more equitable, sustainable, and resilient". [Read more about USDA's climate-smart programs and investments.](#)



U.S. / UAE Initiative Secures \$29.2 Billion for Agricultural Innovation

The Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate), a joint initiative by the United States and the United Arab Emirates to address climate change and global hunger, celebrated \$29.2 billion of investment at COP29 and presented a roadmap for the future. AIM for Climate's network of global partners and Innovation Sprints have also grown, accelerating innovation in agriculture and food systems. [Learn more about the success of AIM for Climate.](#)



DID YOU KNOW?

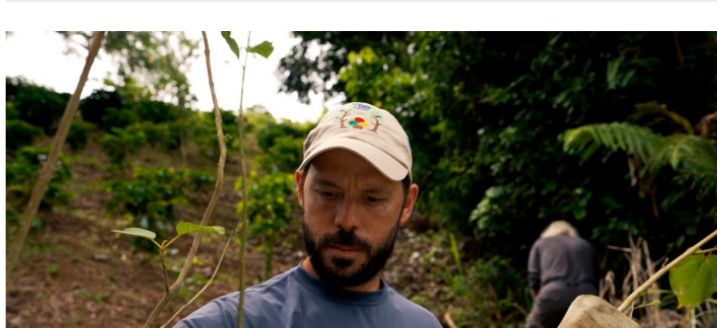
In the U.S., there are between 350 million and 500 million Christmas trees growing on tree farms, but only 30 million are harvested each year. For every tree harvested, 1 to 3 seedlings are planted the following spring, ensuring the sustainability of the industry.

Source: The National Christmas Tree Association



Leather and Sustainability: A Call to Action at COP29

As the world convened at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) to address some of the most pressing global challenges, the leather industry came to the table with a solution, not a problem. With new data accepted on leather's low carbon footprint, the industry seized the opportunity to advocate for a critical shift in how this material is viewed in the fight against climate change. Kevin Latner of the Leather & Hide Council of America elaborates in an exclusive article for the USSA. [Read Kevin's article.](#)



Climate-Smart Project Revitalizes Puerto Rican Coffee Industry

Even your morning coffee can be sustainable thanks to USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities initiative, which aims to expand markets for commodities produced using climate-smart practices. One of the 135+ projects benefitting from this innovative program can be found in the mountains of Puerto Rico, where conservation practices are transforming coffee production. [Find out more about the climate-smart coffee project.](#)



U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol Celebrates Environmental Progress and Record Growth

The U.S. Cotton Trust Protocol (Trust Protocol), a voluntary program for responsibly grown cotton, reached new heights in 2023-2024, with record grower participation and significant strides in environmental stewardship. The Trust Protocol's latest annual report shows a 14% yield increase, resource efficiency improvements (including a 27% reduction in energy use), and notable advances in soil health management. [Read more about the Trust Protocol's progress.](#)



Congratulations to Field to Market's Farmer of the Year!

Tennessee cotton grower Bob Walker was named Farmer of the Year at Field to Market's 2024 Sustainable Leadership Awards for his outstanding conservation efforts and leadership in advancing sustainable agriculture. Bob owns and operates Walker Farms in Yum Yum, Tennessee, with his brother. They raise cattle and grow cotton, corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay, primarily on land that has been in their family since the 1830s, and use a range of climate-smart practices. [Learn more about sustainability on Walker Farms.](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

Here are some of the other stories that made the headlines this month:

- The U.S. election delivered state and local wins for climate and conservation. Voters in California backed a \$10 billion bond for climate priorities, while voters in the State of Washington blocked an effort to roll back their state's climate and conservation policies. Read about the other local successes [here](#)
- A new report from The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST) and U.S. Farmers & Ranchers in Action (USFRA) finds that U.S. agriculture has the potential to be greenhouse gas negative, as outlined [here](#)
- And finally, from 9-13 December, USSA representatives will be in London, Brussels, and The Hague to discuss agricultural sustainability with key industry and policy stakeholders. Follow the discussion daily on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

For more on the above, check out our social media accounts!

The USSA is the voice of U.S. sustainable food and agricultural production. It represents the fertile lands and expansive waters of a great country and gives a voice to all who work and rely on them for food, clothing and materials.

Today, we represent more than twenty-five farming, fishery, forestry associations, and related production & processing sectors who are together responsible for approximately \$10.6 billion of annual U.S. food and agricultural exports to the UK and EU (2023).

USSA Member Organizations:

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute; Almond Board of California; American Feed Industry Association; American Hardwood Export Council; American Peanut Council; American Seed Trade Association; California Prune Board; Cotton Council International; Florida Department of Citrus; Food Export Association of the Midwest; Food Export USA Northeast; Intertribal Agriculture Council; Leather & Hide Council of America; North American Export Grain Association; North American Renderers Association; North Carolina SweetPotato Commission; Organic Trade Association; Softwood Export Council; U.S. Dairy Export Council; U.S. Dry Bean Council; U.S. Grains Council; U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.; U.S. Meat Export Federation; U.S. Soybean Export Council; U.S. Wheat Associates; USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council; USA Poultry & Egg Export Council; and USA Rice Federation.

[Learn More About Our Members](#)



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