FNET case study

World Wide Fruit / Willie Wood

FOOD NETWORK FOR ETHICAL TRADE

Challenge: Water resilience, worker health
Motivation: Business considerations - sourcing decisions

Our story: The extended drought in Southern Africa in 2016/7 drew attention to the reality of the impact of extreme water shortages not only on the farmers, but also on the workforce water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) elements. To support producers in vulnerable regions, we recognised the need for both data and tools. In 2018 we initiated work to develop a water stewardship plan and working with a local partner Blue North, conducted research and developed a water stewardship framework that resulted in 18 case studies from strategic grower partners.

The aim was to raise awareness of the drought reality of our South African grower base, the water management challenges, and the solutions implemented to overcome them. The case studies also look at sustainability strategies and plans for improving sustainability into the future. While focused on water, the case studies highlighted other climate related adaptation related to energy use, Co2 reduction and workforce/community education.

The outcome of this work brought to life what was happening as a result of water shortages, informed our seasonal supplier scorecard and in turn informed our sourcing discussion and decisions, the tools to be used and commitments we needed to make.

The scope of resources required includes a dedicated budget, and resource to conduct the necessary desk top research and stakeholder engagement that brings our growers on the ground realities to life generating our case study content. We invest time, energy and money.

Guidance alignment / top tips

Assessing

- Learn from those at local level who are taking action and ensure you are engaging with all the necessary and appropriate stakeholders.

Prioritising In 2024

- The environmental (water risk) determined the priority - our focus has shifted to the noticeable impact on WASH considerations for the workforce
- Acting (taking action)
- Working with suppliers Code of Conduct (updated 2023) WFL-Supplier-Code-of-Conduct-V5-5-1-compressed.pdf (worldwidefruit.co.uk)
- Worker health is a focus area for us. Suppliers have initiated Worker Health activity - we will profile businesses who demonstrate a commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the workforce. This commitment is reinforced and outlined in our updated supplier code of conduct where we bring together human rights, ethics, and environmental considerations such as:
- The right to clean drinking water,
- Compliance with environmental laws, standards, regulations, permits and reporting,
- Energy consumption and emissions are reduced,
- Environmental protection, conservation of resources and local communities,
- Impacts on the environment and local communities are understood and mitigated,
- Hazardous substances and waste are prohibited.

Tracking

- One part of our tracking is linked to disputed data in the Water Witness Report. A contentious area is the value of recharge versus the need for demand reduction, one trusted source of scientific data I see as being crucial. We seek to bring grower/exporter realities to life and to answer certain WW Report criticisms. We are particularly keen to bring to life the supplier's position on water stewardship accreditations, for example Spring & AWS. Targeting the value that is derived for their growers and their export business.

Communicating

- We need to be aware of language and cultural differences that slow down the process of gathering accurate granular detail & information. It takes time and energy and in turn cost.

Commitments and resources

- The Courtauld Commitment 2030 | WRAP
- Home - Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science)
- SEDEX Radar Sedex launches new risk assessment tool - On your Radar
- Blue North About Us – Blue North
- What We Do | Helping Vulnerable Communities — Water Witness International | Action, Research & Advocacy for a Fair Water Future

FNET case study

Minor, Weir and Willis Limited / Sarah Wadelin

FOOD NETWORK FOR ETHICAL TRADE

Challenge: Water resilience, labour shortages, seasonal shifts
Motivation: Sourcing decisions

Our story: Our HRDD approach started with our existing and embedded Ethical Risk Assessment. Over a period of time, we identified an emerging labour related challenges that coincided with weather extremes of flooding and drought. Labour shortages for harvest seasons also emerged in various regions and correlated with seasonal shifts.

Our workforce risk assessment data for farm and packhouse risks is drawn from and based on:
- Past 3rd party audits and their outcomes
- The SEDEX RADAR risk of the site
- The Workforce – Agency/seasonal staff, and
- The FNET country risk for the site

Sites are ranked as High, Medium 1, Medium 2 or low risk. Working with over 1500 sites this allows our teams to identify and implement action plans and projects where they will have the most impact on the site and on reducing ethical risk.
Once we had identified our climate focus areas, with water being a priority, we gather and store data from the WWF Water risk management tool and the Yale University Environmental Performance Index

Both the ethical and the climate risk data is kept independently but with the ability to view both sets thereby providing a holistic view of overall risk. This data is accessible to technical teams and supplier management staff.

To ensure continued improvement, the company has invested in staff training and resources, for example guidance on gender and water and an ethical workbook for suppliers.

Guidance alignment / top tips

Assessing
- Adding Climate focused risk pillars started with identifying which risk pillars we would use. Our participation in the FNET Climate group allowed us a clear understanding of the tools on offer. We chose our pillars to be:
  - Water Risk
  - Environmental Performance
  - Environmental Potential
  - Sustainability Audit Status

Prioritising
- Risk assessing all sites using the WWF Water risk management tool to map each farm and packhouse in our supply chain. We incorporate suppliers Sustainability Audit Status to help support data at a site level.
- Country ranking is determined from the Yale University Environmental Performance Index.
- Hazardous substances and waste are prohibited.

Taking action
- Suppliers have one point of contact who is trained on both the ethics and environmental requirements. The suppliers are supported through guidance and sign posted to local resources, people, initiatives and projects that builds their capacity to progress and improve.

Tracking
- Data sources are reviewed and updated on regular basis. This is supplemented and supported by site visit reports
- To allow for grower explanations on action taken, variations on performance within growing regions are investigated. For example, on water management, this recognises that 'one size does not fit all'

Communicating
- Relationship development is key to communicating requirements and introducing new initiatives.

Commitments and resources

- SEDEX Radar Sedex launches new risk assessment tool - On your Radar
- Carbon Disclosure Portal
- WWF Water risk management tool & SAQs
- Yale University Environmental Performance Index

FNET case study

Sainsbury's / Rosie Iron

FOOD NETWORK FOR ETHICAL TRADE

Challenge: Worker safety & health, heat stress
Motivation: Business considerations, legal changes and integrated strategic approaches

Our story: We have a human rights commitment to tackle the most salient and evolving H&S risks. This includes evolving risks associated with climate change. The announcement that the Spanish government was introducing a ban on outdoor work during periods of extreme heat provided an opportunity to operationalise our commitment. A pilot project approach, combined with research, is expected to refine supplier guidance and provide a foundation to scale up across a number of commitment areas.

The aim of the initial pilot project in Spanish agriculture is to feed site-level learnings into industry collaborations to encourage action and support alignment on actions to address heat stress. This work is through direct funding from us, with suppliers and growers contributing in time and access.

Guidance alignment / top tips

Assessing

- A combination of external data sources, including TCFD[1] analysis, indicated a growing challenge of heat stress across the Spanish agricultural supply chain. This included discussions with the Spanish Ethical Trade Forums[2].
- As part of wider human rights research, we have a partnership with The Rights Lab[3] to identify risks in support of our overall commitment to sustainability and human rights. This will inform an integrated approach that includes climate change related impacts.
- Internally, climate related concerns were flagged via the food safety team

Prioritising

- Risk assessing all sites using the WWF Water risk management tool to map each farm and packhouse in our supply chain. We incorporate suppliers Sustainability Audit Status to help support data at a site level.
- Country ranking is determined from the Yale University Environmental Performance Index.
- Hazardous substances and waste are prohibited.
- Informing our decision making included historical (2011) known severe human rights risks for agricultural workers – some of which resulted in death[4]. This risk compounded with attention on migrant labour in the sector.
- The Spanish regulation on outdoor working confirmed the growing risk to both workers and suppliers. The regulation covers temperatures of high 30s or over 40C, posing a risk for citizens outdoors or for the environment[5].
- The third component is a combination of the impact of heat in relation to productivity and consumer preference for sustainably sourced food.

Taking action

- We are partnering with a local organisation, La Isla Network. They are leading expert in heat stress – they will assess onsite risks and design protocols that aim to reduce the likelihood and severity of heat stress on workers.
- In conjunction, we are working with our Environment team to integrate human rights into our Climate Transition Plan.
- To harmonise our strategy commitments, we aim to build on existing work a nd learning from our discrimination[6] activity.
- Built into the project is learnings and data that show whether this approach needs adjustment or to prove its value.

Tracking

- Ongoing monitoring will be based on the project key performance indicators followed by the protocols from the project.

Communicating

- Internally there are discussions between the Environment and Human rights team and reported through international communication platforms.
- Worker focus groups and worker representatives have been included in the project launch and will be involved in the discussions.
- A challenge around wider stakeholder engagement has been addressed through learning and building from other work on our strategic objectives. This has included maximising relationships with industry bodies, academics and multi-stakeholder initiatives

Commitments and resources

- ILO guidance on working in heat
- HSE
- IUF climate change resources
- Spain's Climate Change and Energy Transition Act 7/2021 analysis-of-spain-s-climate-change-and-energy-transition-act-7-2021 (cms.law)
- Human Rights Saliency Report 2021-22.pdf (sainsburys.co.uk)
- Supply chain governance in agriculture: Standards and audits to improve OSH in the European agri-food sector | Safety and health at work EU-OSHA (europa.eu)

1. TCFD
2. Heat stress Seminar - Ethical Trade Forums (foroscomercioetico.com)
3. Nottingham University, Rights Lab
4. Ethical Consumer report / ETI response
5. https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/05/12/spain-drought-working-outdoors-during-extreme-heat-will-soon-be-made-illegal
6. Discrimination Human rights | Sainsbury's (sainsburys.co.uk)