



# 2024 Sustainability Report






# Table of Contents

About Red River Foods.....	02
Message from CEO .....	03
Introduction to Report.....	04
People .....	06
Products.....	07
Planet.....	08
SDG Alignment.....	09





## 2024 Highlights:

**East Africa** ..... 11

**South America** ..... 12

Supporting Forest Conservation  
through Brazil Nuts ..... 12

Elevation Pilot Project: Pioneering  
Regenerative Agriculture in Peru ..... 13

**West Africa** ..... 14

USAID/Trade Hub Project ..... 14

Farmer GAP Trainings ..... 15

Pruning & Thinning in Côte d'Ivoire ..... 17

Beekeeping ..... 18

Community Development  
in Côte d'Ivoire ..... 21

**Success Story** ..... 23

**Malaria Initiative** ..... 24

**USA** ..... 25

Recycling with Pig Farms ..... 25

Solar Panels at Sprouse ..... 25

**Character Spotlight** ..... 26

**Regenerative Organic and  
Fairtrade Certifications** ..... 27

What is Regenerative Organic  
Certification? ..... 28

What is the Fairtrade Certification? .... 29

**Baru Nuts** ..... 30

**Looking Ahead** ..... 32

**Upcoming Initiatives** ..... 34

**Achievements Numbers** ..... 35



# About Red River Foods

Red River Foods is a leading global supplier of nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and specialty snacks. Every day we live our mission of sourcing the highest-quality foods, providing expert market insight, and developing sustainable supply chains around the world.



**50+**  
products



**40+**  
countries



**40+**  
years in  
business

## Our mission

Is to source the highest-quality foods, provide expert market insights, and develop sustainable supply chains around the world.

## Our vision

Is to be the premier supplier of sustainably sourced ingredients and foods. We're led by our commitment to doing right from people to products to the planet.

## Our values

Are the foundation of how we do business every day. They're why customers trust us to provide high-quality ingredients and foods, and they are what set us apart to our partners and help us attract talent. These values represent who we are today as well as who we aspire to be.



# Message from CEO

At Red River, sustainability is at the core of our business. As a global supplier of nuts, seeds, and dried fruits, we understand the critical role we play in not only delivering quality products but also in safeguarding the environment and supporting the communities we work with. Our commitment goes beyond meeting market demand; it extends to developing relationships with the farming communities who cultivate the food we source. We invest in sustainable farming practices, provide resources for livelihood improvement, and promote responsible land use to ensure that our value chains remain resilient and environmentally sound.

We believe that the future of agriculture depends on a balance between productivity and preservation. By fostering long-term partnerships with our growers and continually innovating in sustainable practices, we aim to create a positive impact that extends from the fields to the tables of consumers worldwide. Our goal is to build a more sustainable and equitable global food system, where every step of our supply chain contributes to the well-being of people and the planet.

*Dan Phipps*

Dan Phipps





# Introduction to Report

This report first introduces our newly developed sustainability framework, which aims to organize and clarify our company's priorities in the field of sustainability. Second, the report provides a summary of our performance and activities over the 2024 calendar year, showcasing key projects and initiatives that demonstrate our commitment to doing right from people to products to the planet.

Sustainability is an increasingly common term in our industry, with many uses and interpretations. At Red River Foods, we look at sustainability simply. For something to be sustainable, it must be resilient and able to endure against external and internal forces. It is with this interpretation that we approach sustainability, from farm level to delivery of final product.





## Sustainability Framework

This framework is a structure under which we align all sustainability activities in the company. We have developed this framework to plan, select, organize, implement, and communicate all of our sustainability-related actions across our global network of supply chains.



**People**



**Products**



**Planet**

These are the three key pillars that form the core of our framework, which is based upon our company mission, vision, and values. It is with these three pillars that we align all our sustainability work company-wide.



“ When we hear the word ‘Sustainability’ today, and we hear it very often, it’s difficult to pinpoint what it means specifically. Red River began investing in the development of supply chains, particularly at the farm level, over 15 years ago. ‘Sustainability’ was not yet a focus for the industry, let alone an everyday buzzword. We put these actions in place as we saw the need for more equitable supply chains, because we believed (and continue to believe) it is the right thing to do. I wanted us to be able to provide our stakeholders with a simple, easy-to-understand outline of what sustainability means to us and what we are doing to make the world around us a better place. We appreciate your taking the time to read through our framework and hope we can work together on the re-engineering of our global food supply systems for greater impact.

– Juliet Wiebe-King  
VP of Sustainability & Business Development



# People

At the core of any business lie the people who make it happen and ensure it thrives. With our global reach, we have the opportunity to engage with a great number of various stakeholders, from farmers, processors, and small-scale aggregators to multinational trading companies. It is through thoughtful engagement and collaboration that we can work together to improve livelihoods, working conditions, and well-being in our supply chains.

## Farmer Livelihoods

For farmers in our supply chains to prosper, we aim to support them through trainings, farm services, and additional revenue-generating projects. We focus on optimizing on-farm production to maximize yields and creating alternative forms of income, both on- and off-farm. The main activities within this theme are farmer trainings, pruning & thinning, and cooperative development.

## Safe & Decent Labor

Ensuring safe and decent labor conditions for all stakeholders in our supply chains is paramount. Starting at the farm, all the way through to delivery of product to our customers, we guarantee that we do everything we can to uphold international and industry standards by requiring adherence to our RRF Code of Conduct as well as verification by first- and third-party social compliance audits.

## Community Development

Going beyond optimization of primary crop production, we also aim to support farmers and their communities to improve their well-being through other programs like VSLAs (Village Savings and Loan Associations), nutrition and WASH trainings, and scholarships.







# Products

At Red River Foods, sourcing and providing high-quality products are paramount, as defined in our company mission. We see product sustainability as an extension of industry responsibilities. Whether this is the development of increased traceability systems or ensuring responsible sourcing through due diligence with suppliers, we strive for constant improvement and uncompromising commitment to this objective.

## Traceability

Improving our levels of traceability is something increasingly demanded by consumers and by our customers. Therefore, we must advance our capacity and understanding of traceability across our supply chains. We view traceability as a foundational component to several of our other themes, as well as a means to connect our extensive work on the ground with producers to the end product.

## Responsible Sourcing

Ensuring that our sourcing is ethical and responsible is becoming an increasing requirement from governments, lenders, customers, and consumers. For us, ethical sourcing means working to implement fair wages and prices; a key aspect of this is educating our customers on the realities faced by the farmers, harvesters, and producers and the need to protect the environments from which our products are grown.



# Planet

The impact of global agriculture on the environment is considerable, and becoming more apparent as attention increases around it. As part of the food industry, we recognize our place and our responsibility in protecting, conserving, and even regenerating the planet and its resources. Therefore, we aim to minimize our negative impacts, while maximizing our efforts to innovate and regenerate across all of our supply chains.

## Regeneration

To have a positive impact on the earth and the ecosystems from where we source our products, we must take action to implement practices that have regenerative effects, specifically focusing on soil health and biodiversity. Current initiatives include community forest establishment and ROC certifications.

## Innovative (Green) Practices

Finding new and state-of-the-art ways of reducing our impact on the environment is critical to the way we do business. Therefore, we prioritize continual innovation in our planning and company strategy. This could include green energy solutions, recycling/upcycling systems, and reducing GHG emissions.



# SDG Alignment

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 interconnected global objectives designed to address some of the world's most pressing challenges by the year 2030. Adopted by all UN member states in 2015, the SDGs encompass a wide range of ambitious targets, including the eradication of poverty and hunger, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare, promoting gender equality, fostering clean energy and environmental sustainability, and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. These goals serve as a universal call to action, encouraging collaboration among governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals to work collectively toward building a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future for people and the planet.

Through the themes and actions laid out within our sustainability framework, we aim to contribute to the following SDGs:





# 2024 Highlights

Looking back at the past year, our sustainability program has continued to grow and evolve, much like our company. Here are the highlights from around the globe.





# East Africa

Macadamia nut production in Kenya has been notably increasing in recent years and the country has made great strides in the international macadamia market. Our Kenyan macadamia nuts are produced, processed, stored, handled, and marketed in accordance with the highest food safety and quality management standards. Kenyan macadamias are grown solely by smallholder farmers. Our Kenyan macadamia suppliers are involved in a variety of social development activities to ensure long-term sustainability of the macadamia harvest and the communities that rely on these nuts for their livelihoods.

We have partnered with a solely woman-owned macadamia processor, Exotic, which began business in December 2012. Specializing in the processing, packaging, and export of macadamia nuts, the company sources directly from more than 2,000 small-scale farmers in Kenya. Red River Foods has teamed up with Exotic to expand domestic production and processing, grow U.S. market demand, and significantly scale up the trade relationship between Kenya and the U.S. over a three-year period. Exotic and RRF aim to create new jobs along the macadamia nut farming and processing value chain, improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and their families, and increase quality and processing standards while providing access to the global macadamia market. In particular, the project aims to increase macadamia nut exports to the U.S., a currently underexploited opportunity.

#### Expected Impacts:

- 6,201 jobs at the farm level; 35% will be women farmers
- 60 factory jobs; 85% of which will be female employees
- Increase macadamia processing by 3,996 MT
- Improve smallholder farmer sales by USD 4,795,200
- Increase the export of macadamia nuts by 472 MT with a value of USD 5,659,200, primarily to U.S. markets





# South America



## Supporting Forest Conservation through Brazil Nuts

Red River Foods began partnering with Junglekeepers in 2021. Through our partnership, the Junglekeepers collect Brazil nuts from Peru, and we purchase them for processing and distribution in the U.S. market. We also support their ranger program by funding two rangers each year. This collaboration incentivizes local communities to preserve the rainforest and utilize its resources instead of resorting to deforestation for short-term gains.

Junglekeepers is a dedicated organization focused on protecting the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous communities. Their mission is to combat deforestation by preventing illegal logging, restoring degraded lands, and promoting sustainable practices like Brazil nut harvesting. They are purchasing large swaths of rainforest. Currently they own 107,000 acres, protecting it from threats of deforestation. It is central to the Junglekeepers' ethos to employ and train local and indigenous community members in the active protection of land that is ultimately theirs.

In 2024, Red River Foods' support helped to fund the patrolling of over 1,500 kilometers of rainforest, the expansion of Junglekeepers' community education programs, and key conservation initiatives. Our contributions directly supported rangers like Karla, Sandra, and Llasmani, who played vital roles in environmental protection, indigenous cultural preservation, and wildlife monitoring. Highlights included the expansion of early childhood environmental education, the successful release of 60 Taricaya turtles, and advancements in the camera trap project, which captured diverse Amazonian wildlife. Through this partnership, we continue to reinforce our commitment to sustainable sourcing and rainforest conservation.

Forest rangers monitor their concessions, maintain trails, and report any illegal activity occurring on the land being monitored. Rangers also track wildlife to contribute to broader scientific datasets in the region. Within the current boundaries of the reserve they have seen incidents of illegal logging drop by more than 90% and incidents of illegal land acquisition drop to almost zero. Their rangers patrol hundreds of kilometers per year. Within the Junglekeepers' protected land, the animals are safe, the ancient trees are safe, and the forest is free to function as it has for millions of years.

Junglekeepers installing a wildlife camera





# Elevation Pilot Project: Pioneering Regenerative Agriculture in Peru

## Background

For more than 5,000 years, quinoa has evolved to thrive in the harsh climate of the Andean mountains, but modern farming methods are taking a toll on the health of the soil and negatively impacting quinoa yields, quality, and nutritional content. To combat soil degradation from disc plowing, mono-cropping, and erosion, Red River Foods and Bolivian quinoa processor, Andean Valley, launched the Elevation Pilot Project. This three-year initiative, in partnership with Fundación Proinpa, focuses on the implementation of regenerative practices like minimum tillage, native plant integration, cover cropping, bio-inputs, and organic pest control. Starting with 20 hectares, the project aimed to restore soil health, increase yields, improve the nutritional content of the quinoa, and boost carbon sequestration. The goal was to create a model that will train 50 local farmers in these transformative practices, ensuring the longevity of Royal Bolivian Heirloom quinoa.

## Results

A key achievement of the project was the improvement of soil health through innovative methods like minimum tillage and the application of decomposed llama manure. These efforts resulted in a remarkable increase in soil organic matter, with some plots experiencing a rise from 1.8% to 4.7%. The project also implemented bio inputs such as Tricobal and Energy Top, which improved soil carbon content and microorganism activity. Overall, 24 hectares of quinoa fields were enhanced, showcasing the tangible benefits of regenerative methods.

Community involvement was central to the project, with 50 local farmers receiving comprehensive training in regenerative agriculture techniques. These sessions included practical demonstrations and workshops that facilitated a robust knowledge transfer. As a result, farmers reported increased quinoa yields, with some varieties like Mañiqueña achieving up to 1,494 kg/ha, compared to lower yields prior to the project's interventions.

The introduction of native plant species and the establishment of multipurpose living barriers over 2,760 linear meters contributed to combating erosion and improving agrobiodiversity. These measures not only enhanced environmental resilience but also supported CO<sub>2</sub> capture, benefiting the wider ecosystem.



## Looking Ahead

The Quinoa Elevation Project was our first significant investment in regenerative agriculture. The first phase of this project has ended 2024, and we are exploring potential for continuation and scaling out to more farmers/communities. The success of the project has set a benchmark for future regenerative endeavors, showcasing how sustainable farming can significantly contribute to the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the Bolivian Altiplano and beyond.



# West Africa

Our operations in West Africa have long been the centerpiece of our sustainability efforts. This trend continues, as we are forging new partnerships, developing new and innovative programs, all while building upon our past initiatives and experiences. Our company and its subsidiaries have engaged thousands of farmers and supply chain actors to improve livelihoods, increase transparency in our supply chains, and contribute to the transition to a more sustainable and just food system.



## USAID/Trade Hub Project

In 2024, we concluded our work with the three-year long grant program, USAID West Africa Trade Hub Project. The project facilitated the improvement of the cashew supply chain across our operating countries in West Africa. This has been instrumental in our efforts to expand our sustainability efforts within cashew-producing communities in West Africa, particularly Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Numerous initiatives that have taken place as a part of this project are described on the following pages.





# Farmer GAP Trainings

In order for any agricultural practice to be cost-effective, resource-efficient, and environmentally responsible, it is essential that the farmers within that system understand best practices, as well as the impacts that various practices have upon their land, community, and the supply chains they work in.



**Our teams in Ghana,  
Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire  
have trained a total of**

**11,003 farmers**

**in our raw cashew nut  
sourcing areas since the  
beginning of the project.**



## Results

Training topics have included orchard maintenance practices, harvest & post-harvest techniques, and quality management. These trainings not only have an impact on the production systems, farm yields, product quality, and the environment, but they also allow our teams to strengthen relationships with farmers while deepening our understanding of their livelihood systems and way of life.







# Pruning & Thinning in Côte d'Ivoire

Overcrowding, poor tree distribution, and excessive vegetation are common challenges in cashew orchards across West Africa. As a result, yields are generally lower, and tree health is compromised. To address this, the practice of pruning limbs and thinning crowded trees can be introduced. This has several key effects, such as:

- Increasing yield per tree
- Limiting the spread of insect pests, diseases, and fungi by:
  - Allowing air to move freely through the orchard
  - Removal of dead/dying branches, which can harbor diseases and insect pests
- Providing firewood for home cooking and for the creation of biochar (a soil additive), which can be applied to farms to improve soil health

Red River Foods first introduced pruning and thinning campaigns in Ghana in 2016, working with cashew-producing communities to improve orchard management. In 2021, we expanded this initiative to Côte d'Ivoire as part of the Trade Hub project. To implement the program effectively, we have trained chainsaw operators on the best and safest pruning/thinning practices. These operators are equipped with chainsaws and personal protective equipment to ensure safe and efficient execution.

Following the success of previous years, we have continued this impactful initiative in 2024. The pruning and thinning program restarted in Ghana this year and has remained active in Côte d'Ivoire. This work has been fully funded by Red River Foods, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to supporting smallholder farmers and enhancing sustainable cashew production. In 2024 alone, pruning and thinning have been carried out on 93 farms in Ghana and 95 farms in Côte d'Ivoire, bringing the total number of orchards improved through this initiative to 1,072.

## Farmers say...

It's a chance for us to welcome the company and its agents. I had problems maintaining my field. But you've enabled me to do a lot with this project. I knew I had to cut back the branches and create space between the cashew trees, but I didn't have the means. You allowed me to do it for free and I can see the results today. Many thanks to Red River Foods for making this project possible and enabling me to have a quality production this year.

– Koffi N'dri Parfait, Village de Bendé Tanoukro, Zone de Raviart

I would like to thank your company for allowing me to benefit from this program. For an old woman like me, it's a bit complicated to maintain my field and apply all the techniques of good agricultural practice that you've taught us. If you come and do it for us, we can only be happy and thank God for you. My field is blooming nicely, I can feel the air circulating through it, it's lovely to see.

– Kouame Affoué, Village de Kokro Kouassikro

This is the very first time that a company has come to our region and helped us with the upkeep of our fields. Usually, the others wait until we're done and then come to the milking and buy our product. But you, Red River Foods, came first. When I go to my field these days, I see the big difference with your project and I know I'll have a good production this year. My field is developing differently and in the right direction.

– Koffi Kouakou Alexandre, Village de Ando-Simbo, Zone de Sakassou





# Beekeeping

Typical cashew yields in the region average around 500 kg/ha, significantly below the globally recognized potential of over 1,000 kg/ha. One proven strategy to increase yields is promoting beekeeping in and around cashew orchards. The presence of pollinators has been directly linked to improved fruit set and higher yields. Additionally, beekeeping provides an important alternative source of income for farmers through honey and wax sales. For smallholder farmers living near the poverty line, this added revenue can help pay school fees, reinvest in orchards, and improve household resilience.

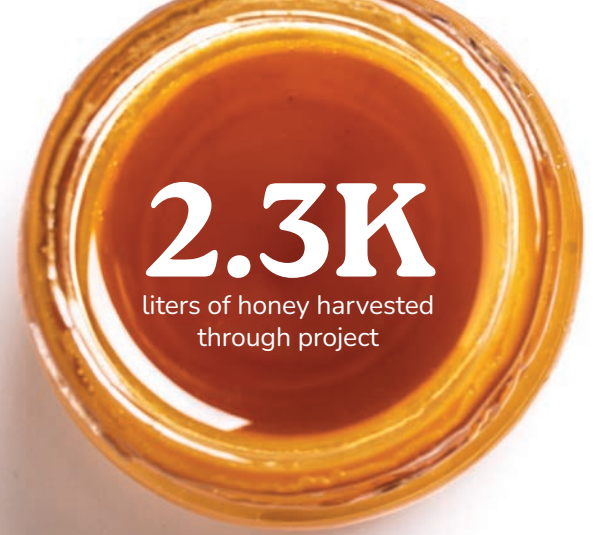


Red River Foods  
beekeeping team  
after a night  
honey harvest



## Ghana

Red River Foods first introduced beekeeping initiatives in Ghana in 2021, with financial support from a major customer. The program began in the cashew-growing communities of Agosa and Bonkwae, where 10 farmers participated in a training program that provided equipment, technical training, and ongoing support. Due to the success and enthusiasm surrounding the project, it was scaled up in subsequent years, expanding to include 30 additional farmers in its second phase.



## 2024 highlights

**100**  
new beehives

**20**  
additional farmers in  
Agosa and Bonkwae



By 2023, a total of 70 cashew farmers had received beekeeping training, equipment, and monitoring support. Participants were democratically selected within their communities, ensuring fair and inclusive access to the program. Out of these 70 beneficiaries, 23 were women, making a significant impact in a traditionally male-dominated activity.

In 2024, the project expanded further, adding 100 new beehives and welcoming 20 additional farmers in Agosa and Bonkwae. The initiative continues to be supported by a major customer, with additional funding from Red River Foods. Training, hive management, and monitoring efforts remain closely coordinated with Blossoms Beekeeping Ghana, a local enterprise founded by Stephen Adu, one of the program's original trainers. Blossoms Beekeeping Ghana has played a key role in sustaining and growing the program, empowering youth and rural farmers while improving cashew pollination rates.



## Côte d'Ivoire

Following the success of the Ghana program, Red River Foods launched a beekeeping pilot in Côte d'Ivoire in the summer of 2023. Partnering with the local organization VASCO-CI, the project introduced 46 new beekeepers in the cashew-producing areas of Raviart and Béoumi. These farmers received essential equipment, training, and ongoing technical support to establish productive apiaries within their orchards. The project quickly demonstrated strong results, with trainers reporting high participant engagement and some of the best honey harvests they had seen in Côte d'Ivoire.

Building on this momentum, the initiative expanded significantly in 2024, introducing four new groups of 20 farmers each—totaling 80 additional beekeepers. Alongside this expansion, an additional 160 beehives were distributed, further strengthening the project's reach and impact. The Côte d'Ivoire initiative continues to be facilitated by VASCO-CI, with funding provided by some of our core customers.



# 2024 highlights

160

new beehives

80

additional farmers

## Looking Ahead

As the beekeeping program continues to grow, we are committed to expanding its reach and impact. In addition to onboarding more farmers and deploying more hives, we will explore ways to enhance market access for honey and wax. This will include identifying potential buyers within national markets and exploring export opportunities to increase farmer incomes and sustain long-term program success.





# Community Development in Côte d'Ivoire



As part of our effort to diversify our approach with farmers and farming communities, we launched a new pilot program in the sourcing zone of Sakassou. The aim was to provide our engaged communities with additional projects based around environmental education/climate change resilience, income diversification/financial independence, and community health. We have launched the following initiatives and, with the immediate feedback, we are planning to scale up all these efforts in the coming years, by both growing in Côte d'Ivoire and expanding to our Ghana operations.

## Community Forest Development

In 2023, we launched a community forest in the village of Aya Sakassou. Spanning approximately one hectare, the land was generously donated by a community member. The initiative was designed to foster environmental awareness, promote green spaces within rural communities, and strengthen community resilience through sustainable forest products.

With collaboration from local authorities and community members, we planted 1,300 endemic trees alongside 1,000 banana saplings. To ensure proper upkeep, we established a monthly maintenance plan in partnership with the community, and early monitoring showed strong seedling growth and enthusiastic community participation.

**1,300**  
endemic trees

**1,000**  
banana saplings

## 2024 Update

While no additional community forests were created in 2024, we have continued to support the existing site. However, the initiative faced a major challenge this year—a severe bushfire devastated the forest during the dry season. It remains uncertain how the ecosystem will recover, but we are fully committed to working with the community to rehabilitate the area and restore tree cover. This unfortunate event has highlighted the critical importance of maintaining firebreaks rigorously, especially during the dry season. While a 4-meter-wide firebreak had been established in 2023, this experience underscores the need for even more vigilant fire management. This key learning will be applied to all future sites under the initiative, ensuring better protection for reforested areas. Despite this setback, the project remains a priority, and we will continue working with the community to determine the best path forward for restoration and resilience-building.



## Village Savings and Loan Associations

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have become a vital tool for financial inclusion in cashew-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. These community-based savings groups provide farmers, particularly women, with access to financial services in areas where formal banking is limited. VSLAs enable members to pool their savings, access small loans, and invest in income-generating activities. Beyond financial benefits, the program fosters financial literacy, strengthens economic resilience, and promotes community cooperation.

Red River Foods has played a key role in establishing and revitalizing VSLAs in its sourcing regions, integrating them into broader community development efforts. The program not only strengthens local economies but also encourages entrepreneurship among members. Many participants use their loans to improve their farming operations, invest in small businesses, or cover household expenses. Additionally, complementary training programs—such as business management, soap and pastry production, and soft drink manufacturing—equip members with the skills to diversify their income sources.

**These community-based savings groups provide farmers, particularly women, with access to financial services in areas where formal banking is limited.**



### Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, the VSLA program was launched in five villages—Ando Simbo, Aya Sakassou, Konankro, Nianda, and Tayamoukro—with 149 participants, 90% of whom are women. The initiative aimed to strengthen financial literacy and empower rural cashew farmers through savings and loan activities. Each group consists of around 30 members, with structured leadership to ensure accountability and sustainability. Initial contributions began in September 2023, allowing members to accumulate savings and take out loans for income-generating activities (IGA).

By early 2024, the VSLAs had collectively saved over 3.3 million CFA francs, with a portion of these funds used to support local businesses. The program's impact is evident in the establishment of 29 IGAs, including small-scale farming, cassava trade, textile weaving, and food processing. Additionally, members have leveraged their savings to cover household expenses and invest in cashew farm improvements. Regular monitoring and training sessions have further reinforced the program's effectiveness, ensuring members develop sound financial habits while expanding their economic opportunities.

### Ghana

In Ghana, the VSLA project in the Bono Region has achieved remarkable progress, with 14 new VSLA groups formed across five communities, surpassing the original target of five. As of early 2025, these groups include 394 members, 73% of whom are women. Collectively, they have mobilized savings worth GH¢120,629, with GH¢84,150 disbursed as loans to 113 members. These loans have primarily been used to invest in cashew farms and small businesses, contributing to improved financial resilience among participants.

Beyond financial services, the Ghana VSLA initiative incorporates practical skills training to support alternative income sources. A total of 311 members participated in training sessions on soap and pastry production, with women constituting 92% of the trainees. These skills have enabled members to start small businesses, boosting household incomes. The project has also emphasized financial literacy, equipping members with tools to budget effectively, manage loans responsibly, and grow their savings. With increasing demand for VSLA participation, the program is set to expand, further strengthening financial independence in rural communities.



SUCCESS STORY:

# Elizabeth, the Soap Producer

Elizabeth, a cashew farmer and member of the Anidasuo VSLA group in Offuman, Ghana, is a prime example of how VSLAs can transform lives. Through the skills training program funded by Red River Foods, she learned to produce soap and other cosmetic products. Eager to put her knowledge into practice, she took out a GH¢2,000 loan from her VSLA to invest in soap production. Today, she not only earns additional income from selling her products but has also reduced household expenses by making soap for her family.



*I am very grateful to RRF for equipping us with skills that help us generate extra income. I no longer need to buy soap for my family because I can produce it myself. I encourage my fellow VSLA members to take this opportunity seriously and use it to improve their livelihoods.*

Elizabeth's journey reflects the broader impact of the VSLA initiative—empowering women with the skills, resources, and financial confidence to become self-sufficient. Her success story highlights the potential of VSLAs to drive economic transformation, particularly for women in rural cashew-producing regions.





# Malaria Initiative

Red River Foods continues its commitment to community health and sustainability with its Malaria Vector Control initiative in the Bouaké region of Côte d'Ivoire. In partnership with In2Care and FarmStrong Foundation, the project focuses on the retreatment of EaveTubes—an innovative mosquito control technology designed to reduce malaria transmission.

**Between April and May 2024, 29,269 insecticide-treated EaveTube discs were replaced across 20 villages, ensuring ongoing protection against the malaria-transmitting Anopheles mosquito.**

This effort builds upon previous installations, utilizing locally trained teams to maintain effectiveness while adhering to strict safety and environmental protocols.

The retreatment process involved a specialized facility in Bouaké, where the trap discs were cleaned, recoated with electrostatically charged insecticide powder, and safely stored before reinstallation. Field teams, composed of trained personnel, worked systematically to replace the treated discs in nearly 2,900 participating households. Prior to installation, extensive community engagement ensured continued participation and understanding of the project's benefits. The initiative maintained rigorous safety measures, including the use of personal protective equipment, regular safety training, and controlled handling of insecticides to minimize exposure risks.

Sustainability remains central to this effort, with responsible waste management protocols in place. Used EaveTube discs were washed and stored for future retreatment cycles, while wastewater was treated following WHO and local environmental regulations. The initiative's success underscores the importance of continued retreatments every 12 months to sustain effectiveness. Moving forward, additional malaria prevention strategies, including bednet distribution and community awareness programs, will complement the EaveTubes intervention, reinforcing Red River Foods' dedication to long-term health and well-being in its sourcing communities.






# USA



## Recycling with Pig Farms

The initiative began in March 2022. To date, we've upcycled more than 42,000 pounds of product. These products have been donated to seven different farms all over central Virginia, from Tappahannock to Powhatan to Fredericksburg and Chester. Products donated include cashews, pine nuts, chickpeas, wasabi peas, chili bits, rice crackers, hazelnuts, and raisins.



## Solar Panels at Sprouse

In an effort to become more energy independent and ecological, Red River Foods has installed a substantial solar energy system at our warehouse in Richmond, Virginia. In total, we have installed 692, 455W solar panels, creating a 314kW system. It is capable of producing 389 MWh annually, which is enough to power roughly 35 households for a year!!!

# 692

455W solar panels  
producing

# 389

MWh annually







## CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

# Stephen Adu

In 2018, Red River Foods sponsored a Bees for Development “Master Beekeeper” training program. The program was an intensive training program designed to build the capacity of its participants to implement beekeeping, and to share it among their greater communities. After graduating from this program, Stephen has continued to promote and practice beekeeping in the areas around Touboudom, his hometown, which is a few kilometers up the road from our Techiman warehouse.

Four years later, Red River Foods teamed up with Stephen to continue growing its beekeeping project in the communities of Agosa and Bonkwae, Ghana. He was first hired to conduct the training of farmers and of the RRF team on the practice of beekeeping and provide monitoring and support to all those involved. As the relationship grew, our collaboration developed into providing support to Stephen’s organization so that it can grow and continue to realize his vision.

Stephen has officially registered his business under the name “Blossoms Beekeeping Ghana” with the guidance of the RRF GH and sustainability teams. This will be the first step toward managing his business professionally and will allow him to grow further by gaining access to financing and loans from local institutions.

We plan on continuing to grow this collaboration and exploring the reality of working with Stephen to access new markets, and even exporting of his honey in the future.



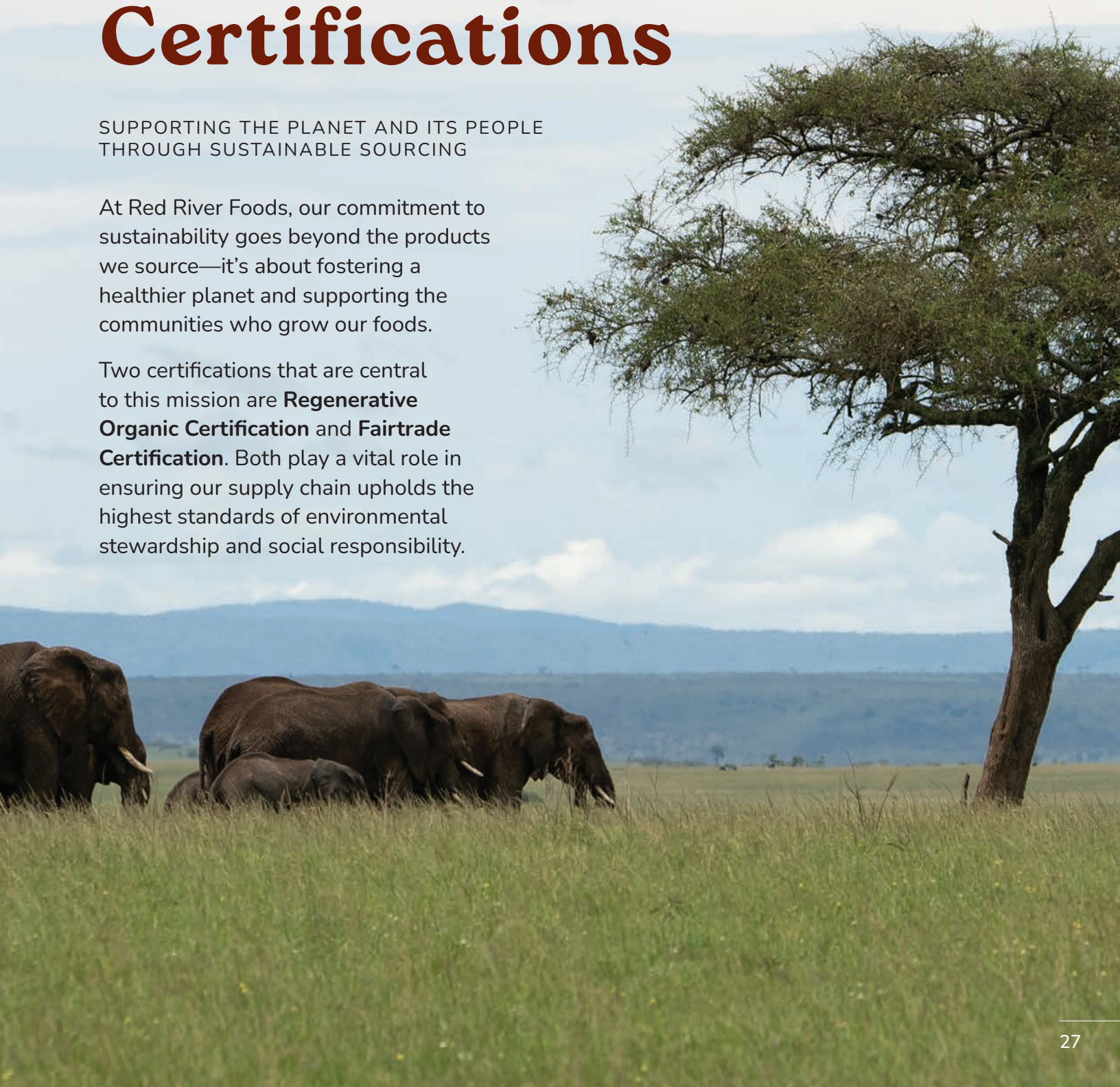
# Regenerative Organic and Fairtrade Certifications



SUPPORTING THE PLANET AND ITS PEOPLE  
THROUGH SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

At Red River Foods, our commitment to sustainability goes beyond the products we source—it's about fostering a healthier planet and supporting the communities who grow our foods.

Two certifications that are central to this mission are **Regenerative Organic Certification** and **Fairtrade Certification**. Both play a vital role in ensuring our supply chain upholds the highest standards of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.







## What is Regenerative Organic Certification?

Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC) is considered one of the highest standards for organic agriculture in the world. It builds on the USDA Organic standards but goes further by focusing on three key pillars:

### Soil Health & Land Management

Prioritizing farming practices that regenerate the land, such as cover cropping, crop rotation, and composting, which restore soil biodiversity and sequester carbon.

### Animal Welfare

Ensuring humane treatment for animals when livestock is part of the farming system.

### Social Fairness

Supporting the rights and well-being of farm workers and farming communities.



By partnering with farms that are ROC-certified, Red River Foods is investing in agricultural practices that help combat climate change by improving soil health and increasing carbon capture. These regenerative practices restore ecosystems, reduce erosion, and ensure the long-term productivity of the land.

### Our ROC products include:

Macadamias, Dried Mango, Dried Coconut Smiles, and Quinoa.



#### Coconut, Ghana

14

Farmers

579

Acres of ROC Land

#### Mango, Côte d'Ivoire

15

Farmers

1,196

Acres of ROC Land

#### Pineapple, Côte d'Ivoire

12

Farmers

44

Acres of ROC Land





## What is the Fairtrade Certification?

Achieving the goal of sustainable livelihoods for farmers is a complex and dynamic challenge, especially within the Cashew industry. Fairtrade America is one of the key organizations driving this effort. Our Fairtrade certification means that we're partnering with the farmers and workers we source from towards fair prices and wages, safe working conditions, and thriving communities.

Our certified products have been audited against internationally respected Fairtrade Standards, which:

### **Foster economic sustainability**

by establishing minimum prices and Fairtrade Premiums that farmers invest back into their businesses and communities.

### **Promote environmental**

**protection** through sustainable farming methods that minimize harmful chemicals and protect biodiversity.

### **Support social**

**equity** by upholding labor rights and prohibiting child or forced labor.

At Red River Foods, sourcing Fairtrade-certified products strengthens our partnerships with farming communities. We know that paying fairer prices and offering long-term commitments are critical ways we can support farmers' economic security and opportunities for growth.

### **Our Fairtrade products include:**

Brazil Nuts, Cashews, Macadamia, Dried Mango, and Quinoa.



## Looking Ahead

By integrating Regenerative Organic and Fairtrade practices into our supply chains, Red River Foods is contributing to a food system that nourishes people and the planet. These certifications are more than labels—they are commitments to sustainability, social justice, and long-term stewardship.





COOL NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT –  
WE ARE NUTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## Baru Nuts



Baru nuts are gaining popularity for their wonderful taste and nutritional characteristics; not only are baru nuts allergen-free, they contain the highest protein and lowest fat content of any tree nut. Baru nuts have an amazing story—the collection of these nuts is a new, vital source of income for indigenous populations and the baru trees are a tool to reforest heavily deforested land in Bolivia and Brazil. Red River Foods is dedicated to developing the baru nut supply chain to optimize potential benefits for local communities and to improve the sustainability of local farming practices in the Chiquitania region of eastern Bolivia and the Cerrado region of Brazil.



## Baru Nut Production

Baru nut is known as *Almendra chiquitana* in eastern Bolivia. The name baru comes from the Brazilian Cerrado region to which the tree is endemic. The scientific name of baru is *Dipteryx alata Vogel*, a leguminous tree that grows to a height of between 7 and 15 meters. The nut has a firm, crisp texture with a taste reminiscent of peanut, cashew, and almond. The mature tree has a durable, attractive timber that has considerable commercial value. Current production in Bolivia and Brazil is harvested almost entirely from the wild population, forming part of the natural Cerrado ecosystem. Baru nut production represents an important source of income for communities, creating jobs and incentives for the conservation of the Cerrado. Current productivity of baru nuts is variable, with individual trees yielding between 50 and 1,500 fruits per year (0.1 kg to 3 kg of nuts per year). The yield varies according to weather conditions, soil fertility, the activity of pollinating insects, and the age of the tree.

Baru trees grow in open sunlight with good drainage, but do not tolerate frosts. The tree grows well in a wide range of soil types, from heavy clay soils to light sandy soils. The tree is deep rooted, establishing a long taproot at early stages of growth. This makes the tree relatively drought tolerant. The tree is also resistant to fire, making it a hearty, climate-change resilient crop. The nuts are harvested mostly by local indigenous communities in the months of July to September—a task carried out largely by women. Cattle and wild animals often eat the discarded pulp, which constitutes 50% of the weight of the fruit. At present, the main means of reproduction of the tree is from natural regeneration. Some initial experience has been gained with the establishment of seedlings in pasture in silvopastoral systems on cattle ranches. This creates the potential for a symbiotic relationship with existing cattle farms—the cows can eat the discarded by-products of baru nut harvesting while providing a secondary income source for ranchers.

### Geographical Distribution of Baru Nuts

Current levels of production in the department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, are between 10-20 tons per year. It is reported that the whole of the Cerrado region of Brazil produces around 700 tons per year. There is considerable scope to increase production in the extensive area of the Cerrado biome. Baru trees occur naturally in the Cerrado region of South America. The vegetation of the Cerrado is a fire-climax savannah with dispersed trees in natural grassland. The traditional use of the Cerrado is for extensive cattle ranching. However, large areas of the Cerrado have been lost by conversion to soybean and cattle production in recent years. In Bolivia, baru trees are distributed across the eastern area of the Santa Cruz department, a continuation of its natural distribution in the Brazilian Cerrado.





# Looking Ahead:

## Our 2025 – 2027 Goals

01

### Farmer & Agricultural System Programs

Working with farmers and farming communities has been at the core of Red River Foods' sustainability efforts over the years. We recognize that we have a responsibility to farmers to help them optimize their production systems while providing guidance on best or innovative practices. We also work with production communities to boost livelihoods and streamline our procurement activities, through the implementation of income-diversification projects, such as beekeeping.

#### Pruning & Thinning

More than 50% of the world's cashew production takes place in Africa, where the crop thrives. One widespread issue with the prevailing production systems is the spacing and maintenance of cashew orchards. Overly dense orchards generally have low yields and are more susceptible to pest and disease pressure. For several years, we have worked with farmers and local chainsaw operators to prune and thin farmers' orchards. We aim to build on this experience and continue supporting farmers to implement this highly impactful practice in their orchards.

#### Beekeeping

We encourage and support farmers to learn and implement the practice of beekeeping in their existing agricultural systems, particularly among West African cashew farmers. This practice has several positive impacts on production and livelihoods. By placing beehives in cashew orchards, we can increase pollination, resulting in higher yields, and farmers can also sell honey, wax, and other hive products for additional sources of revenue.

#### 2025-2027 Goals

Prune & thin

**200** farms

#### 2025 Goal:

Reach **250** active beekeepers in RRF Initiatives

#### 2026 Goal:

Achieve **350+** farmers engaged in beekeeping projects

#### 2027 Goal:

Establish **honey import** from farmers to U.S. for commercialization



# 02

## Community Development Projects

At Red River Foods, we understand that healthy communities are the foundation of healthy farmers, and a healthy supply chain. We engage directly with community leaders and officials to implement various projects, in particular projects that address gender equality/financial independence and reforestation/land restoration.

### Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)

VSLAs are informal groups that offer savings, loan, and mutual assistance facilities to members of a community who do not have access to formal financial services. They are autonomous and self-managed groups of a given number of self-selected members. The groups can be mixed or women only. Training is provided to the groups to enable them to manage their activities. At the end of a cycle, the members of a VSLA share the funds in proportion to their savings and start a new cycle if they wish.

2025 Goal  
Reach  
**30**  
total VSLAs

2026 Goal  
Increase to  
**45**  
VSLAs

2027 Goal  
Increase to  
**60**  
VSLAs





# Upcoming Initiatives

## Carbon Emissions

To minimize the negative impacts of our operations, from farm to table, we will strive to assess our impacts and implement innovative solutions to mitigate or minimize them.

2025  
Goal

Measure our company's Scope 1 & 2 emissions

2026  
Goal

Calculate our Scope 3 emissions

2027  
Goal

Develop our decarbonization strategy and roadmap



# Achievements by numbers 2018-2024

13,588

Farmers Registered and Trained

12,801

Farms Mapped

1,072

Farms Pruned and Thinned



206

Farmers equipped and trained on beekeeping

7,168<sup>lbs</sup>

Honey harvested

1,090

Hives installed

19

VSLAs established

\$14,127

Dollars saved by VSLAs

543

# of community members in VSLAs

77% women

\$6,584

Loans taken out








**Virginia  
(Headquarters)**

2840 Sprouse Drive  
Richmond, VA 23231  
T: 804.320.1800

**RedRiverFoods.com**

 Red River Foods

 @redriverfoods

[sales@redriverfoods.com](mailto:sales@redriverfoods.com)

