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Pioneering Sustainable Change

How Daabon's **Regenerative Organic Certified® Gold status** illuminates the company's dedication to environmental excellence for planet and people.

In an era punctuated by environmental challenges and market upheaval, the narrative of sustainability has become a keystone in the mission statements of visionary companies. The consumer market, informed and insistent, now demands that the brands they support not only align with but actively champion sustainable ideals. "Consumers are increasingly aware that healthy-for-self is synonymous with healthier-for-the-planet," says Sherry Frey, Vice President Total Wellness for global research firm NIQ. >>



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NIQ reports that a striking 46% of consumers are looking to brands to pioneer meaningful sustainable transformations. Consumers are increasingly demanding transparency and accountability from brands, seeking evidence of real sustainability efforts that go beyond marketing. In response, progressive companies are implementing impactful changes, not just in their final products but throughout their production processes.

LEADING WITH REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

Daabon has long recognized the palm oil industry's impact on the environment. In 1992, Daabon became the first palm company to offer certified organic products. In 2004, it became a founding member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and later, in 2010, the first Latin American palm producer to attain RSPO certification. An important step. A recent study found that RSPO palm reduces emissions by 35 percent compared to non-certified palm oil.

"As consumers, we're more attuned to environmental concerns than ever before, and Daabon is acutely aware of this shift," shares Carlos Reyes, Daabon's certifications director. "By committing to sustainable practices, we're not only making a positive impact on the environment but also fostering trust and establishing a commendable reputation in the market."

Today, the Colombia-based, generationally owned company continues to take a proactive stance. It is committed to transforming the narrative of the palm industry by embedding sustainability into the core of its operations. The goal? To not just stop damage to the environment, but to actively improve the health of Colombia's native ecosystems and the planet as a whole.

This is why focusing on regenerative agriculture—a practice that goes beyond preservation to actively improving ecosystems—became an important >>



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**- Carlos Reyes,
certifications director,
Daabon**



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next step for Daabon. This approach is vital for its contribution to reversing damage and fostering a thriving agricultural landscape. By diving deep into regenerative practices, Daabon set a benchmark for the industry, showcasing that a pivot towards environmental stewardship and sustainable progress is both a viable and necessary stride towards the future.

REVITALIZING THE ECOSYSTEM THROUGH FARMING PRACTICES

A significant shift in the sustainable revolution is the rising interest in regenerative agriculture. This practice represents a deeper level of commitment to sustainability that starts at the source—the soil. Regenerative agriculture has been gaining traction as a primary method for promoting healthier soil, ensuring animal and human welfare and bolstering biodiversity with an aim to counteract the effects of climate change. Globally, the effectiveness of regenerative farming is deeply connected to the well-being of farmworkers and surrounding communities. The goal is a holistic rejuvenation of both ecological and societal systems.

"It's all about restoring soil health, conserving nature and fighting climate change. Healthy soil is a game-changer—it resists pests, holds water better and even captures carbon. As the environment becomes a bigger concern, I think more and more companies will look to regenerative practices like Daabon's," states Carolina Torrado, Daabon's sustainability director.

The quick adoption and widespread use of the term "regenerative" has raised some eyebrows, running the risk of it being seen as just another marketing term like "natural." The Regenerative Organic Alliance (ROA), the organization that oversees the Regenerative Organic Certified® (ROC™) program, understood this risk as it designed the stringent ROC™ certification, which requires participants meet comprehensive standards in soil health, animal welfare and worker fairness. Key to ROC™, which was established in 2017, is the fact that organic certification is its baseline. Participants must be certified organic and fair trade before they can be considered for ROC™ to ensure that ROC™ products meet the highest benchmarks for regenerative and organic practices.

"The momentum in regenerative agriculture is not only promising but demonstrable. This is a movement where everyone has a role to play, and the benefits are manifold. Farmers can revitalize their land, leading to richer soil and more robust ecosystems," explains Whitlow. "This allows animals to thrive in more humane conditions, and people who work the land can enjoy better health and well-being. It's a comprehensive improvement—your farm will perform better, your animals will live better, and your community will be healthier." >>



"Younger consumers are becoming increasingly discerning about the environmental impact of crops like cotton and palm. Daabon has not only acknowledged this but has led by example for over 40 years. Addressing the challenges posed by palm oil production is essential, as the consequences of inaction are the irreplaceable loss of forests and species."

**- Elizabeth Whitlow,
executive director
Regenerative Organic
Alliance (ROA)**



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BENEFITS OF REGENERATIVE ORGANIC FARMING

Introduced by the Rodale Institute, the Farming Systems Trial (FST) has illuminated the benefits of organic farming:

1. RESILIENCE IN EXTREME WEATHER: Organic systems consistently maintain yields during droughts. Organic corn yields **31% higher** than conventional in drought years.

2. SOIL HEALTH AND CARBON CAPTURE: Diverse carbon inputs in organic farming result in higher microbial biomass. Higher soil organic matter develops over time, vital for carbon sequestration.

3. EFFICIENT WATER MANAGEMENT: Healthy soil, bolstered by organic farming methods, not only absorbs water more rapidly but also utilizes it more efficiently, ensuring that plants have the moisture they need to thrive.

4. CONTINUOUS SOIL IMPROVEMENT: Organic systems witness consistent soil health enhancements.

5. THE FUTURE OF FARMING: Organic farming is not only viable but essential for humankind's survival.

THE PINNACLE OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE: GOLD LEVEL ROC™

In this landscape of change, driven by both consumer expectations and corporate conscience, achieving ROC™ signifies a company's dedication to the highest standards of sustainability, with the Gold level ROC™ serving as a testament to exceptional commitment. Recently, Daabon's practices, community programs and a suite of certifications culminated in its attainment of ROC™ Gold.

To receive the Gold level distinction, a plantation must consistently demonstrate excellence in the three pillars of Regenerative Organic Certified®. This includes comprehensive soil rehabilitation initiatives, strict animal welfare standards and a significant improvement in the quality of life for workers and their communities.

Daabon's practices, such as avoiding deforestation, enhancing biodiversity and implementing robust community support programs, are essential components that have contributed to this prestigious recognition. Daabon Group's attainment of Gold level ROC™ status not only reflects its steadfast dedication to sustainable and regenerative agriculture, but also marks Daabon as **the first palm oil company to reach such heights in the world**. This recognition underscores a comprehensive approach that considers every facet of the agricultural environment.

"Regenerative Organic Certification is strategically vital for Daabon. It aligns closely with our company's mission and corporate values, focusing on the production of high-quality organic and sustainable products that meet customer demands," shares Reyes. "The rigorous standards of ROC™, which include requirements under the USDA National Organic >>





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Program (NOP), reflect our commitment to not only meeting but exceeding the benchmarks for organic and sustainable practices. This certification, combined with Fair Trade, strengthens our resolve for Corporate Social Responsibility, both in terms of our commitment to our workforce and addressing stakeholders' concerns effectively."

FUTURE FORWARD

A new report by Grand View Research, Inc. projects the global regenerative agriculture market to soar to a staggering USD 2,900.2 million by 2030. This sector

anticipates a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 15.7% from 2023 to 2030.

"While many are attempting to define 'regenerative,' ROA has been setting the standard since its inception in 2017, offering a robust and credible program," shares Whitlow. "Given the rising concerns, I believe that consumer support for foods addressing these issues will only continue to grow."

Projections suggest that consumer expectations will continue to play a crucial role in shaping the strategies and actions of companies, and the responsibility will soon shift to companies to prove their sustainability credentials >>

**SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
EXTEND TO PEOPLE
AS WELL**

Central to Daabon's mission are key initiatives and projects that foster community growth and environmental stewardship. Key sustainability projects include:

INCLUSIVE BUSINESS: Handmade uniforms are crafted by women and members of Daabon's local communities.

EMPOWERING EDUCATION AND

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Under the company's sustainability commitment, Daabon enriches official educational programs with entrepreneurship training, enhancing self-employment opportunities and bolstering economic resilience within local communities.

SMALL-HOLDERS: Recognizing the importance of community support and sustainable agriculture, Daabon is actively engaged in supporting dozens of small palm oil producers. Daabon provides these family farmers with a range of benefits, including



valuable technical assistance, as part of the company's commitment to fostering a sustainable supply chain.

FOOD SAFETY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

Daabon is dedicated to empowering women through specialized training in the cultivation of vegetables and aromatic plants in their home gardens.

This initiative supports households in becoming self-sufficient and developing additional revenue streams, paving the way for increased community well-being and economic independence.



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instead of merely waiting for regulatory bodies to monitor compliance. Businesses, especially those in the agricultural sector, are taking decisive measures in response to the pressing demand for sustainability.

With operations spanning continents, Daabon stands as a testament to what unwavering dedication to sustainable practices can achieve in today's fast-paced world. "Daabon has always been about sustainable practices," says Torrado. "Our whole foundation was built on principles like respect and sustainability. It's amazing how we've evolved—starting from conventional farming in the 1940s to now being 100% organic, and even transforming agricultural waste into something useful. We are aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030."

REGENERATIVE AG: A DATA-DRIVEN SNAPSHOT

Daabon leads the way in a critical shift towards sustainable farming, emphasizing regenerative practices that restore the earth and empower the community. Here are some key points that shape the current landscape:

- **Regenerative reach:** As of 2023, a mere 1.5% of U.S. agriculture utilizes regenerative methods. Yet, global sourcing commitments are rising, with the intention of broadening regenerative agriculture's influence.
- **USDA and cover crops:** The USDA's ambitious goal to double cover crop plantings to 30 million acres by 2030 is part of a larger effort to promote climate-smart agricultural practices in the U.S.
- **Soil Depth Crisis:** In some areas, topsoil depth has dramatically decreased over the last century, signaling an urgent need for soil restoration practices.
- **Success Stories:** Certain farms practicing regenerative methods since the 90s have quadrupled the amount of organic matter in their soils, improving rainfall infiltration from half an inch per hour to 30 inches per hour.

DAABON'S CERTIFICATIONS

Daabon's commitment to sustainable production is exemplified by its adherence to rigorous standards, as evidenced by a suite of prestigious sustainability-focused certifications, which include:

USDA ORGANIC CERTIFICATION, AND MORE: Daabon became the first palm oil producer to offer a USDA organic-certified palm oil product in 1992. Daabon also adheres to organic standards around the globe, including European Union standards, JAS (Japan), Organic Korea, Organic China, Biosuisse (Switzerland) and Colombia's National Standard, all of which guarantee commitment to organic soil management and the avoidance of synthetic chemicals.



ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL (RSPO): This certification is a pledge to responsible palm oil production that safeguards social and environmental standards. Daabon was a founding member of the RSPO.



FAIR TRADE USA: This certification reflects Daabon's dedication to upholding the rights and welfare of workers and their communities.



NON-GMO PROJECT: This is a non-profit organization offering rigorous product verification and trustworthy education that empowers people to care for themselves, the planet and future generations that confirms the absence of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) in the manufacture of products.



REGENERATIVE ORGANIC (ROC™) GOLD: The ROC™ standard is a new certification addressing growing consumer demand for climate-friendly, fair and ethical products. In 2023, Daabon became the first palm oil producer to achieve Gold level for ROC™.

