

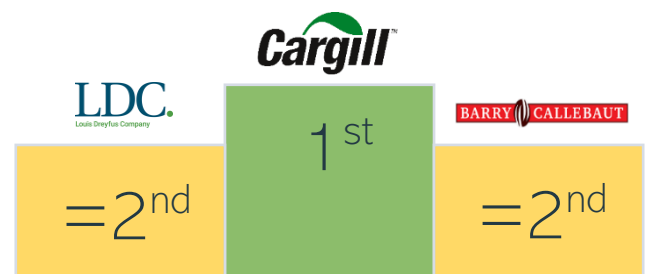
Susty Story Ranking

Which Soft Commodities Traders Tell Their Sustainability Story Best?

Everyone has a story to tell. But who tells it best?

We reveal the best in the soft commodities business.

Want to improve your communications? Read on.



Other companies reviewed (alphabetically):



Context has 21 years of experience in sustainability strategy and communications. We work across business sectors and specialise in food, agriculture and agtech. We work globally, with offices in London and Los Angeles.

Get in touch for a (free) personal call on how to tell your story better.

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Introduction

Everyone is a publisher now, and good story telling is good for business. It reassures customers, attracts and retains top talent, and boosts your reputation with investors, consumers and civil society. Two things differentiate the leaders: having a good sustainability story to tell - and telling it well.

We help companies develop their sustainability strategies and then support them in telling their sustainability stories. In the first part of our analysis of the food and agriculture sector, Context investigated which soft commodities traders are the best.

Our Approach

We selected 10 top soft commodities traders who are members of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development or the SAI Platform. As members, these companies are committed to advancing sustainable business practices and should have good stories to tell. We analysed the sustainability content on the global company website.

First, we scored if the company has a good story to tell from 0 (poor) to 5 (excellent):

- Does it have a sustainability strategy with goals?
- Has it reported against its sustainability strategy since 2017?

Second, we scored how well the story is told from 0 (poor) to 2 (excellent) across four categories:

- **Messaging:** Does the company tell their sustainability story clearly and concisely?
- **Liveliness:** Has the company shared progress in the last three months via a blog or news update?
- **Multimedia:** Does the company make good use of videos or infographics to explain their story in a sharable, engaging way?
- **Social media:** How often does the company share sustainability-related posts? On average, what level of engagement (comments, likes, shares) do these posts generate?

Results

Do traders have a good story to tell? Yes.

We found all the companies reviewed have sustainability content and nearly all report progress. This is reassuring and understandable because sustainability pressures are intense in agricultural supply chains.

But the level of detail shared on the strategy varies greatly. Some websites present in-depth explanations for why sustainability is integral to business and clearly describe goals and programmes. Others are far behind, sharing only vague, high-level descriptions.

Nearly all report on progress. The best companies break information into topic-specific updates that enable diverse audiences to quickly find the information they need.

Do traders tell their sustainability story well? Most could do better.

Most companies have made the necessary investment in content. All can get a much greater return with better story telling.

Cargill, Louis Dreyfus and Barry Callebaut are the leaders. They use great visuals, multiple channels and offer bitesize stories.

Here’s a breakdown of our findings. Find examples of best practice and the detailed results on the next page.

	Messaging	Liveliness	Multimedia	Social media
Why it matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The right messaging is vital if you want your story to resonate with target audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh content (at least once a quarter) shows you are actively engaged. It makes your story believable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infographics and videos make your sustainability story understandable and memorable. Sharable content gets the word out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media is one of the best ways to reach key audiences and to get your company’s work known.
What we found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few companies tell their story in an individualised, clear way, but others fail to explain themselves concisely and accessibly. Common pitfalls are use of jargon and text that could be lifted from any company’s website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most companies have a blog or news section with sustainability stories, but post frequency varies. Top companies post at least once a month and are tuned into news and current trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most companies use infographics and videos but not to their full potential. They miss the opportunity to explain the whole strategy in a memorable, easy-to-understand way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most companies tweet about sustainability on their main corporate handle. There is a big difference in post frequency and success - the best companies generate over 40 engagements per post.
Top 3 tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Incorporate science, but avoid jargon. Readers want to see you’ve made informed choices – but text should be intelligible to non-experts. ✓ Keep things simple. Don’t hide key messages in lengthy text. ✓ Be individual. Many of your peers have sustainability webpages. A personalised tone helps you stand out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be current. Sustainability is a hot topic; show your readers you’re leading the way. ✓ Words don’t always say it best. Vary your content with videos, infographics and images. ✓ Keep it brief and engaging. Readers won’t read an essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bring it all together, but simply. The best infographics show how the different pieces of the strategy fit together and work towards a shared goal. ✓ Get creative. Coloured boxes with arrows are outdated. Best practice uses graphics to illustrate concepts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consistency is key. Best performers tweet daily. ✓ Don’t be boring. Get the quality versus quantity balance right. Craft memorable tweets! ✓ Influence the influencers. Twitter is like a networking event. Have a hit-list of those you want to impress and engage them.

Best messaging



- Simple but **strong messaging** on why sustainability is integral to their business: “We all love chocolate and want it to be around forever”.
- Incorporates science without being too academic. Makes for **light, accessible and informed** reading.

Best liveliness



- Links sustainability work to what is happening in the news. For example, work on **fighting fires** during the 2018 Asian Games.
- Filters allow easy navigation of **stories**. A “popular reads” section highlights notable content.
- Stories cover a range of topics and many feature **video interviews** to add a human touch.

Best multimedia



- Olam’s **sustainability framework** succinctly shows how strategy activities work together to improve agriculture and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. More graphics would help balance text.



- Cargill’s **sustainable soy** document neatly explains the issue and links this to the strategy.

Best social media



- **@Cargill** covers many sustainability topics in daily tweets, such as gender, food security and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Thoughtful captions and reshares of partners’ content result in a high number of engagements per post.

About Context

Strategy

We’ll help you make a better business by devising the right strategy.

Our custom services include:

- Material issues assessment
- Stakeholder mapping and engagement
- Strategy development
- Implementation planning
- Risk forecasting and management
- Issue deep-briefings
- Sector and best practice benchmarking

Impact

We’ll help you connect with stakeholders, across platforms:

Communications

- Websites
- Sustainability reporting
- Content from infographics to video
- Employee briefing materials
- Executive presentations
- Event and meeting facilitation

Social media

- Platform selection and strategy
- Content development and scheduling
- Influencer engagement
- Analytics and reporting



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social

environmental

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