

# 2016 Illinois Governor's Sustainability Award Winner



**ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**  
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## GRIFFITH FOODS



For almost one hundred years, Griffith Foods has been a key contributor and active member within the global food industry. Founded in 1919 originally as Griffith Laboratories, the fourth generation family-owned organization is a global

developer and manufacturer of customized food ingredients. The company's capabilities range from seasonings and breadings, to sauces and functional ingredients that extend shelf-life and improve food safety. Over the past ninety-seven years, Griffith has grown and expanded globally to include a presence in over thirty countries while maintaining its headquarters in Alsip, Illinois.

### SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY AND OUTLOOK

Griffith Foods' triple-bottom-line Sustainability Platform is founded on caring for the communities in which they do business, driving responsible environmental action, and operating ethically and strategically to promote long-term sustainability. This philosophy allows them to make an exponential impact on their people and the planet. They are guided by purpose and an uncompromising respect for employees, customers, communities, suppliers, and business partners.



In 2015, they utilized a materiality analysis which identified areas where Griffith could drive positive impact within people, planet and performance, and aligned with internal and external stakeholders. This analysis called-out six of the 18 subcategories for Griffith to focus.

Each year Griffith Foods builds on the progress made in the previous year related to the Sustainability Platform. They engage experts to validate their sustainability platform, and evaluate the initiatives against internal benchmarks and stakeholder priorities and expectations. Griffith will continue working with external experts to bring valuable insights and available knowledge to help improve their sustainability impact.

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### KEY STATISTICS

	<b>50%</b> increase in cafeteria recycling
	<b>200,000</b> meals provided for hunger initiative
	<b>1.3MM</b> lbs liquid waste diverted from landfills
	<b>537,000</b> gallons water reduced in sanitation use

### ABOUT GRIFFITH FOODS

Established: **1919**  
as **Griffith Laboratories**

Location: **One Griffith Center  
Alsip, Illinois**

# of employees: **350**

Produces: **Seasonings, food textures and coatings, sauces, bakery and dough products, functional blends, and food safety solutions.**

NAICS code: **311942**

Website: **[www.griffithfoods.com](http://www.griffithfoods.com)**

### ABOUT THE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR'S SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Since 1987, ISTC has presented Governor's Sustainability Awards to organizations in Illinois that have demonstrated a commitment to sustaining our environmental and economic health.

Any Illinois public or private organization is eligible to apply.

Find out more at:  
[istc.illinois.edu/istcawards](http://istc.illinois.edu/istcawards)  
or email [istc-info@illinois.edu](mailto:istc-info@illinois.edu)



## TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

A breakdown of strategies and technologies that enabled Griffith Foods to increase efficiency and reduce their environmental impact.

### **Management & Operational Strategies**

- ✓ Rebranded to reflect purpose, diversity of expertise, and sustainability
- ✓ Developed a sustainability platform
- ✓ Engaged and implemented sustainable supplier initiatives
- ✓ Created global and local environmental policies
- ✓ Implementing ISO 14001 in all facilities
- ✓ Conducted a materiality assessment

### **Waste Strategies**

- ✓ Treatment of process water with on-site wastewater treatment plant
- ✓ Partnered with employees and vendors to recycle cafeteria waste

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- ✓ Sponsored community recycling events
- ✓ Engaged high school students to learn about careers
- ✓ Partnered with a food non-profit to end hunger

## ABOUT ISTC

The Illinois Sustainable Technology Center is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ISTC's mission is to encourage and assist citizens, businesses and government agencies to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources and reduce waste to protect human health and the environment of Illinois and beyond. Visit our website at: [istc.illinois.edu](http://istc.illinois.edu)

## RECYCLING

Griffith's office sustainability action squad partnered with Aramark and Quincy Recycle to launch a Cafeteria Recycling Program. Employees now have the ability to recycle paper, cardboard, plastic, and aluminum in the cafeteria. Since the implementation of this program, the amount of material recycled from the cafeteria has increased 50%, from 9,600 lbs in 2014 to 15,000 lbs in 2015.

The Alsip facility has an on-site wastewater treatment facility for the treating of process water. As part of the sustainability initiative, all processed liquids are treated and sent back to the city for filtering and re-use. All of the solids from the waste treatment facility are pumped out into a tanker truck and sent out for re-use as fertilizer for farm land. This initiative re-directed 1.3MM pounds of liquid waste from landfills in 2015.

## SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

The goal of global sustainable sourcing is to have farm to fork traceability, quality assurance at source, consolidation of logistics, inventory reduction, bulk sourcing with reliable suppliers, and consistent product quality. In 2015, Griffith Foods US transitioned the majority of the black pepper portfolio to global sustainable sourcing (GSS) black peppers. In addition to black pepper, the GSS team started the transition process for sage and is expanding the initiative to white pepper and red chilis with Rainforest Alliance Certification.

Griffith Foods initiated a Supplier Sustainability Survey in 2015 to improve supplier evaluations. All of Griffith's nearly 1,500 suppliers were asked to take the survey which included questions concerning: avoiding slavery or child labor practices, discrimination, improve community involvement, ethics, favoring recycled materials, water conservation, reducing waste, energy and pollution, species sponsorship and charitable contributions. Suppliers will receive a rating based on the survey responses which will be considered when making supplier decisions. Griffith will administer the standardized survey each year and judge year-over-year improvement.



## COMMUNITY & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



Griffith Foods developed a partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD). In September 2015, an internal food drive was held, resulting in a

donation of 1,989 pounds of food to the GCFD. Griffith matched \$1 for every pound, giving \$1,989. Griffith Foods worldwide participates in the Produce for Hunger initiative, producing and donating almost 3 million meals on World Food Day each year.

Several Griffith Corporate Chefs have provided support for the Food Depository's workforce development program, training unemployed and underemployed adults to help gain employment in the food industry.

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