



Interview Birgitt Walz-Tylla  
September 2014

## “INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE”

*Especially when it comes to agriculture, sustainable practices nowadays play an ever greater role – not least because topics like food security and food quality are becoming more and more important for the food industry, politics, and of course consumers. Birgitt Walz-Tylla, Bayer CropScience Head of Sustainability and Business Stewardship, talks about Bayer’s innovative knowledge platform Bayer ForwardFarming and why an initiative like this can help increase the awareness of the important role of sustainable agriculture in society.*

### **Why is it so important for a company like Bayer CropScience to support sustainable agriculture?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Bayer CropScience is one of the world’s leading innovative crop science companies in the area of seeds, crop protection, and non-agricultural pest control. At Bayer, we believe that sustainable agriculture is the only way to overcome current and future agricultural challenges to ensure food security for an increasing world population. Our company partners with farmers around the world, providing integrated crop solutions. These combine seeds and chemical and biological crop protection products with complementary services, as well as advice on stewardship measures for environmental and human safety.”

### **How is Bayer ForwardFarming managed within the company?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Bayer ForwardFarming is a holistic, cross-functional approach. It involves collaboration between various departments ranging from Research & Development to Marketing & Sales. To implement Bayer ForwardFarming, a framework concept has been developed, which can now be customized for selected farms by local Bayer organizations.”

### **What does Bayer CropScience want to achieve with this initiative?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “With the Bayer ForwardFarming initiative, we want to demonstrate sustainable agriculture measures in practice. We are keen to demonstrate new solutions in modern agriculture on working farms. This also gives us the opportunity to consistently improve our portfolio solutions and to exchange this know-how with farmers. A further objective is to increase dialog and communication on sustainable agriculture with our partners in, for example, business, the food industry, politics, and academia, as well as consumers. Finally, we want to increase society’s awareness of the role of sustainable agriculture in ensuring food security.”



**Could you please describe the “Rings of Sustainable Agriculture”?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “The Rings of Sustainable Agriculture visualize Bayer CropScience’s innovative solutions to support farmers in applying sustainable agriculture measures. These solutions comprise three components: Integrated crop solutions, proactive stewardship, and partnerships.”

**What’s behind the integrated crop solutions? Could you describe this point in a little more detail?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Integrated crop solutions are based on high-value seeds and crop protection products. We offer a broad portfolio of seeds, such as vegetable seeds for 28 different crops including tomatoes, onions, and carrots, and seeds for broad-acre crops including rice, oilseed rape/canola, soybean, and cotton. Furthermore, we develop and market chemical and biological crop protection products to defend crops against plant diseases as well as insect pests and weeds. Finally, we provide extensive service backup for sustainable agriculture. This service includes training, field demonstrations, diagnostics, and forecasting tools.”

**Why does stewardship play such an important role within the initiative?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Within the framework of proactive stewardship, Bayer experts train farmers worldwide in the safe and appropriate handling and application of crop protection products to ensure human and environmental safety. These training events also emphasize the importance of using only registered crop protection products.”

**You also mentioned partnerships. How can partnerships help increase awareness of the role of sustainable agriculture?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Partnerships continuously improve our expertise and that of our partners towards the implementation of sustainable agriculture measures.

At farm level, partnerships help us to understand the major challenge for farmers that need to produce more food, although their most important resources – arable land and water – cannot be increased indefinitely. Partnerships allow us to jointly support farmers in connecting economic success with our joint responsibility for the environment and society.”

**How did the idea to establish the Bayer ForwardFarming initiative first arise?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Bayer has traditionally cooperated with farmers worldwide to further develop and promote the added value of sustainable agriculture. We are looking for better ways to exchange expertise and to continuously learn about current and future agricultural challenges. In addition, we want to help the farmers themselves to communicate about solutions and the positive impact farming has on the well-being of communities. Bayer ForwardFarming brings these aims to life.”



**How can a “normal” farm become a Bayer ForwardFarm?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “The farm should be led by a full-time and passionate farmer who is open to innovative technologies and the continuous improvement of farming practice. The farmer should be independent in his farm management decisions and fully committed to the principles of good agricultural practice.”

**How many more Bayer ForwardFarms are planned for the next five to ten years and where will they be located?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Our idea is to continue expanding our initiative, starting in Europe and Latin America. Eventually, Bayer ForwardFarming will be implemented worldwide, so that we achieve around 30 to 50 farms.”

**How would you sum up this initiative?**

Birgitt Walz-Tylla: “Bayer ForwardFarming demonstrates sustainable agriculture in practice. Together with farmers and other partners, we aim for increasing agricultural knowledge and providing access to a worldwide network for best practice exchange. Bayer ForwardFarming also facilitates dialog with society on agricultural challenges and the benefits of sustainable agriculture. We strongly believe that we can only master this century’s challenges by working together to sustainably drive farming’s future.”

For more information please visit: [www.forwardfarming.com](http://www.forwardfarming.com)