

10 Ways to Celebrate

Earth Day

Here at Measure to Improve (MTI), every day is Earth Day! We're always looking for ways to give back and protect the Earth and we encourage you to help, too. Not sure how? We've compiled a list of 10 great ways for the produce industry to get involved and help the environment this month. Check them out and let us know how you plan to celebrate!

1. Host A Gleaning Event

[Gleaning](#) events gather the edible produce that remains in a field after harvest and provide this food to those in need. Show how produce partnerships can have a positive impact by working together to harvest perfectly edible produce and reduce hunger in your local community. To host a successful event, you'll need the collaborative effort of a local farmer, volunteers, and food bank. This is a great way to get the community involved and truly make a difference this Earth Day!

2. Plant Bee-Friendly Plants

Pollinators contribute \$24 billion to the US economy every year! [Honey bees alone contribute \\$15 billion](#) and many crops, such as almonds, rely on them. Help bee populations by planting bee-friendly plants like lavender, sage, or sunflowers. Plant these on-farm or even gift them to your employees to plant at their homes. We're sure they will be happy to help!

3. Pledge to Eat Plant-Based

Try eating plant-based for Earth Month. By sticking to fruits and vegetables, you can save water and reduce your carbon emissions with every meal. You can pledge to eat plant-based the whole month, promote Meatless Mondays at work, or host a plant-based potluck that showcases everyone's favorite produce. Check out [The Produce Mom's](#) website for creative recipes!

4. Volunteer at a Local Cleanup Event

Trash cleanups have gone viral with #trashtag! Join the movement and help beautify your local beaches, parks, and communities. In the agricultural community, food safety is a top priority, and removing trash from alongside farmland or even community gardens is a great way to beautify an overlooked area and help the produce industry. Don't forget to share your hard work and use #trashtag to show off your success!

5. Visit Your Local Recycling Facility

After you put that bottle in the recycling bin, where does it go? In Monterey County, our recyclables are transferred to the local Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Click [here](#) for a virtual tour of our MRF and the technologies they use to recycle. You could also plan a visit with your co-workers, friends, or families to your local MRF to learn about the recycling process, what materials are and aren't recyclable, and how you can help recycling efforts.

6. Conduct A Physical Waste Audit

What are you and your coworkers throwing away? Host a physical waste audit to find out! At a physical waste audit, you'll sort, categorize, and weigh the materials you throw away to see what you could potentially Reduce, Reuse, Rot (Compost), or Recycle. At MTI, we've sorted through over 15 tons of landfill and recycling! Grab your coworkers and see what's in your waste stream. Could you be doing more to help the planet?

7. Host A Recycling Event

Already have a recycling program, but want to do more? Try hosting a recycling event for hard-to-recycle items, such as electronic waste. Or, order a TerraCycle box to collect items like disposable gloves, hair nets, beard nets, and earplugs (hello, smock room!). Some TerraCycle boxes are free, but others come at a cost. Check out the possibilities [here!](#)

8. Try Your Hand Upcycling

One person's trash is another's treasure! Take what was once considered "trash" and turn it into something better. Take on a traditional upcycling project, like using a chipped mug to pot a plant, or get more creative and upcycle your produce. Ever heard of Broccoli Slaw or Sprout Leaves? These healthy and delicious products are made from parts of the plant that were once considered waste! How creative can you get with your upcycling projects?

9. Internal Competition

Nothing motivates employees like a little competition. Depending on how big your company is you can do person vs. person, department vs. department, or facility vs. facility challenges. Who can recycle the most material this week? Which team had the highest diversion rate or cleanest waste streams this month? Who found the most useful upcycling opportunity? Who can pick up the most trash at a clean-up event? There are so many possibilities – let us know what competition gets your teams motivated!

10. Make A Pledge

The sky's the limit with pledges! Here are a few pledge examples to get you started: go paperless, create a recycling or a composting program, eliminate plastic in the lunch room, or buy sustainably sourced products (i.e. FSC, Fair Trade, Sustainably Grown, B Corp, etc.). At MTI, we're pledging to refuse single-use plastics and track our progress for the entire month of April. Your pledges could mean making small changes, but when your whole company makes a small change it can have a big impact!