

FIFCO leads in sustainability with its innovative climate strategy

FIFCO seeks to generate actions to adapt to climate change, reduce its environmental footprint and impact management.

Florida Ice and Farm Company (FIFCO) is constantly updating its environmental strategy, with the objective of generating actions that allow it to adapt to climate change, reduce its environmental footprint and manage impacts to continue operating.

According to FIFCO's Health, Safety and Environment Corporate Manager, Gerardo Miranda Fernández, in an interview granted to Delfino.cr, the company is carrying out a series of actions to approach its objectives on issues such as plastic, water, solid waste and climate resilience.

Climate resilience

Miranda shared that they are working to provide their operations with continuity so that, despite adverse weather conditions, they can continue operating.

We set ourselves the objective of having greater climate resilience that allows us to adapt and manage the impacts we will face, so that our operations can be sustained. So when we talk about climate resilience, what we are talking about is adapting to climate changes in order to move forward," he added.

They evolved their positive carbon strategy based on greenhouse gas mitigation and reduction to incorporate the new elements of adaptation and impact management within a new climate action strategy under a systemic approach and risk management.

In this regard, they have three main lines of action in mitigation:

- **Reducing the consumption of fossil fuels in their operations for the thermal processes required for beverages and food.**
- **Increasingly reducing its electricity consumption through energy efficiency.**
- **Electric mobility: transition to more sustainable transportation to bring products to the point of sale, transforming its vehicle fleet.**

While in adaptation they promote sustainable agriculture, as many of their products depend on agriculture, such as fruit for juices, malt, beans, tomatoes, etc. In addition to supply in the face of an adverse weather condition.

What would happen if our bean supplier suffered a weather event? We define how we are going to respond to that situation".

By 2025, FIFCO's environmental objectives are to improve the beverage portfolio so that it has more and more sustainable alternatives with returnable glass packaging, aluminum, poly laminated packaging, and where single-use plastic is less and less used. It also aims to replace secondary plastic in beer packaging (such as the six-pack). Finally, they seek to continuously improve their water, carbon and positive waste status.

Plástico 360

In the case of plastic, they have a strategy called "Plástico 360" (Plastic 360). This has a comprehensive vision on how to avoid and eliminate, from product design, placing plastic on the market.

"What we have done is to look for friendlier packaging, place more glass or aluminum on the market and educate the consumer, where we have a very aggressive agenda to promote more sustainable packaging".

He sustained that, from the design of plastic packaging, they are working on the lightening part, that is, to see how to make the packaging they place on the market have less plastic. "This basically means making the container lighter, the lid lighter and the neck shorter", he explained.

He also mentioned that they use recycled resins that were recovered through their collection programs, so as not to use more virgin resins that come from petroleum. He pointed out that Refrescos Tropical and Agua Cristal already use 100% recycled resin, "which from the eco-design point of view is a very positive environmental attribute and element because we are using the same plastic that was already on the market".

Additionally, he made reference to FIFCO's work in terms of packaging collection, in which for a little less than 30 years it has had a recovery program that together with the collection centers in the country, manage to recover those packages that reached the market and were in the consumer's hands.

They arrive at a collection center and we recover them to be able to recycle all these materials and in this regard, we have a very good success story to tell, because we have managed to recover more than 100% of the plastic packaging we place on the market".

He highlighted that in 2022 they recovered 119% of the plastic packaging placed on the market. In other words, more containers were recovered than were placed on the market.

Water Positive

With respect to water, they aim to reduce the footprint and consumption they have in all their operations and in their facilities from measurement and reduction, to generate a positive environmental value.

He commented that the company's beverage operations in Costa Rica are in a line that they call water positive. In this line they measure all the consumption of this liquid and thanks to this they have achieved considerable reductions:

In 2004 we consumed 16 liters of water to produce 1 liter of beverage and today we are in the order of 4 liters of water to produce 1 liter of beverage, that is, we have significantly reduced that consumption and we are still very active looking for new alternatives for reduction".

Specifically, they seek to reduce the remaining footprint through initiatives to return water to the aquifers from which they draw their water supply. Examples of such initiatives are:

- **The payment for environmental services program for subway aquifer recharge**
- **The Agua Tica Water Fund, a financial mechanism under the public-private partnership scheme**

“Zero waste to landfill”

Regarding solid waste management, Miranda Fernández indicated that all the facilities in Costa Rica have a zero waste to landfill certification. This means that the waste generated internally goes to a recovery stream and what is sent to the landfill is less than 0.5% of the waste generated.

What drives us is to ensure that any waste generated within our operations is placed in some other recovery stream, whether our own or external, but always seeking to maximize the use and value of the materials and energy.

He also pointed out that they have a carbon positive strategy in all their facilities, including the two hotels in Guanacaste that they own and the retail manufacturing plant.

These are all carbon positive operations, which now means that they all measure, reduce and offset up to 20% above their carbon balance condition”.