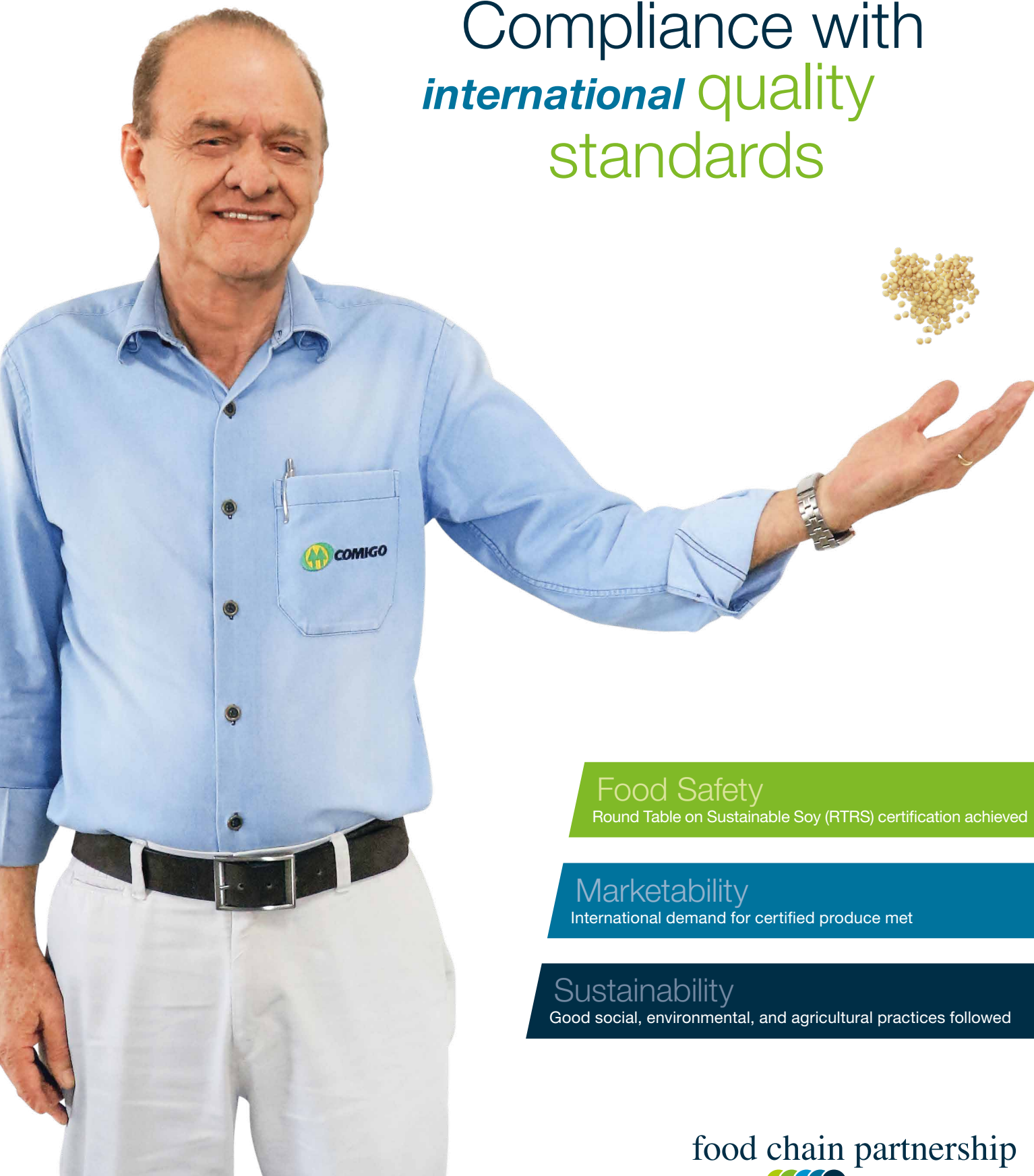




Compliance with *international* quality standards



Food Safety

Round Table on Sustainable Soy (RTRS) certification achieved

Marketability

International demand for certified produce met

Sustainability

Good social, environmental, and agricultural practices followed

food chain partnership



What was *the market situation?*

Brazil is the world's second-largest soybean producer (after the US) with more than 119 million tons of soybeans harvested in the 2017–18 season. Of that total, 64.4 million tons were exported in the first eight months of 2018, making soybeans Brazil's leading export commodity, mainly to China. Given the significance of this crop, local soybean farmers are increasingly investing in good agricultural practices to continue soybean production in a sustainable way. This process is facilitated by certification such as the Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS).

This Food Chain Partnership project is based on collaboration between Bayer, COMIGO, and Aliança da Terra. COMIGO, a cooperative founded in Rio Verde, Goiás, in 1975 for processing, industrializing, and commercializing agricultural products, has its core business in soy.

Currently, COMIGO is made up of about 7,500 farmer members, making it one of Brazil's six largest cooperative organizations. Bayer and COMIGO have already been partners for more than 30 years. Aliança da Terra, a Brazilian NGO, connects farmers, researchers, environmentalists, and entrepreneurs in the agribusiness to promote environmental awareness and good land management practices.





Challenges:

- Sustainable soybean cropping seen as a “license to produce”
- Implementing good social, environmental, and agricultural practices
- Achieving RTRS certification



Solutions:

- Deployment of the Bayer Valore program to help achieve RTRS certification
- Development of COMIGO's own Pensar Valore program to support farmers in achieving certification
- Close collaboration between the project's three partners



Benefits:

- Compliance of soybean production from COMIGO members with the RTRS sustainable soybean standard
- Improvements in farmers' management processes through implementation of certification standard
- Established RTRS certification as a key pillar for soy production at COMIGO

“We have been guiding the producers about responsible management tools for a long time. In order to generate this awareness, we offered, for example, environmental advice to all the cooperatives involved. Thanks to Bayer and the Aliança da Terra, we have been able to step up these efforts and achieve international standards, such as RTRS.”

Antonio Chavaglia, COMIGO



What were the challenges?

The COMIGO Cooperative and its members have always worked in a sustainable way. With the demand for certified agricultural produce growing worldwide, and Europe in particular seeing certification as a “license to produce,” COMIGO was looking for a program of good agricultural practices for its members. The decision was made to go

for RTRS certification in order to guarantee responsible practices in growing soybeans. The main challenge was thus to persuade the soybean farmers in COMIGO’s member cooperatives to adapt to the RTRS requirements by implementing the necessary measure and work towards achieving certification.



What was the solution?

Besides supplying innovative crop protection products, Bayer offered its Valore program to support the soybean farmers in incorporating good agricultural practices and ensuring a sound symbiosis of productivity, profitability, and socio-environmental responsibility. Valore consists of three steps: a diagnostic visit to a farm, followed by a plan of action; a suitability process; and finally the audit and, if

successful, certification. A decisive step was the implementation of COMIGO’s own Pensar Valore program to support its soybean growers in achieving certification. And last but not least, the close collaboration between COMIGO, Aliança da Terra, and Bayer was essential to the project’s success.



“We developed a strategic plan with COMIGO in 2016, with sustainability being one of the main points. Through this plan COMIGO was the first Brazilian cooperative to obtain RTRS certification. We are proud to be able to contribute to this, and bring good agricultural practices to its members.”

João Prudente, Bayer Brazil





What did *we achieve?*

Within the first year of implementing the project, COMIGO became the first cooperative in Brazil to achieve RTRS certification when six of its agricultural cooperative members were certified after a rigorous evaluation of approx. 110 items relating to environmental, social, and economic issues. As a result, COMIGO was able to source 15,046 tonnes of certified soybeans grown on 3,967 hectares after the 2017–18 harvest. The initial six certified producers are expected to be followed by many more in 2019.

About Food Chain Partnership

Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the need for healthy nutrition. Food Chain Partnerships help to supply consumers with high-quality fresh produce, which forms the basis of a healthy diet. But such partnerships can only succeed if they involve every player in the food chain – from the farmer and processor to the exporter or importer and retailer. The Crop Science Division of Bayer has the global experience and cutting-edge expertise to create a successful partnership at every level.



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