



By Sydney Moore

How to Be Sustainable

Lubes'n'Greases consulted General Director **Remco Klaassen** of Matrix Lubricants, a recipient of the EcoVadis Platinum achievement, to discuss what it takes to be a sustainable business in today's lubricants industry.

Lubes'n'Greases: How important is collaboration to sustainability?

Klaassen: Collaboration is essential for sustainability. This is not an effort that one company alone can drive; it requires suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and end users to take responsibility together.

Lubricants play a critical but often overlooked role in sustainability. While we work in a traditional industry that evolves more slowly than other sectors, we must recognize that our decisions impact energy efficiency, emissions and resource consumption across multiple indus-

tries. Only by working together can we move past the outdated image of oil and show how lubrication is a key enabler of sustainability.

The lubrication industry must stop seeing sustainability as an afterthought and start embracing its role as a critical enabler of efficiency and waste reduction. By combining forces, we can transform the perception of lubricants from a "dirty" necessity to an essential tool for a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Lubes'n'Greases: How have regulations and legislation impacted Matrix's sustainability endeavors?

Klaassen: Regulatory frameworks are a major driver behind our sustainability efforts, pushing us to innovate and remain compliant with evolving environmental standards. However, these regulations don't just impact us—they affect our suppliers, our customers and their entire supply chains. Sooner or later, everyone in our industry will need to adapt. Companies that take action early will have a competitive advantage, while those that wait will eventually face stricter compliance demands and risk falling behind.

One of the biggest regulatory drivers is the EU's goal to reduce carbon emissions by 55% by 2030. This has directly influenced our product development strategy. In response, we have expanded our range of food-grade and biodegradable lubricants, including products that meet EU Eco-label requirements. These regulations are pushing industries toward more sustainable lubrication solutions, and we want to proactively provide options that help our partners meet these new standards.

But compliance alone is not enough. Regulations are only one piece of the puzzle; they set the minimum standards, in my opinion. We would like to go beyond compliance by anticipating industry shifts and helping our partners transition before they are forced to. By proactively adapting to regulations and leading the way in sustainable lubrication, we ensure that our business, our customers and their partners are prepared for

the future, not just reacting to it when the time comes.

Lubes'n'Greases: How has Matrix implemented sustainable business practices?

Klaassen: Our commitment to sustainability is reflected in a wide range of initiatives. We have transitioned to a fully electric fleet and collaborate with CO₂-neutral transport companies, ensuring that logistics align with our environmental goals. Our facilities operate on solar energy, allowing us to power our production and offices with renewable sources. Beyond operations, our product innovation plays a crucial role in sustainability. Our product assortment consists of food-grade and biodegradable lubricants that maintain high performance while significantly reducing environmental risks, particularly in industries such as marine, forestry and agriculture.

Waste reduction is integrated into every aspect of our business. It's not just about packaging, though we have transitioned to recyclable materials; it's also about minimizing all forms of waste, including energy waste, operational inefficiencies and unnecessary product use. By creating lubricants that perform just as well or better than traditional alternatives, while also reducing environmental impact, we help industries tremendously cut down on energy waste, excess lubricant usage and disposal needs.

Lubes'n'Greases: What roadblocks or setbacks have affected Matrix's ability to be a sustainable business?

Klaassen: Sustainability comes with challenges, and overall, change is difficult. It is one thing to integrate sustainability into the culture of our own organization, but finding and developing like-minded partners all over the world is an even greater challenge. However, this is exactly what drives us. When people truly understand why we are committed to sustainability, they are far more likely to support and embrace the transition.

One of the key challenges we face is the misconception about the performance of food-grade or biodegradable lubricants. Many customers still believe that eco-friendly or food-grade alternatives are less effective than traditional lubricants. To counter this, we have invested heavily in R&D to develop lubricants that often outperform conventional options.

Regional differences also play a major role in how sustainability is adopted. In Europe and North America, strict regulations and environmental awareness drive demand for sustainable lubricants. In contrast, in developing markets, cost remains the dominant factor, making it harder to justify the premium for eco-friendly solutions. To overcome this, we focus on the total savings rather than the costs of the products. Because in the end, true durability is what saves customers the most money.

Lubes'n'Greases: What plans does Matrix have to increase its sustainability profile moving forward?

Klaassen: One of the key areas of development is the expansion of energy-efficient, food-grade and biodegradable lubricant solutions. Many industries, particularly in manufacturing and food processing, require high-performance lubricants that meet strict safety and hygiene regulations and contribute to reducing energy consumption and operational waste.

With over 140 food-grade and biodegradable approvals, I believe we are actively developing to improve overall efficiency and helping companies reduce their environmental footprint while maintaining optimal performance.

Industry engagement remains a key part of Matrix's sustainability strategy. The company will continue to strengthen its role in industry-wide sustainability initiatives, maintaining and expanding its EcoVadis Platinum status to ensure it remains at the forefront of responsible business practices. By focusing on these key areas, I believe we are committed to shaping the future of sustainable lubrication. ♦

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