

Introducing MENV 2025 Alumni Achievement Awardee:

**Taylor
Clayton**



Taylor graduated from MENV in 2020 and specialized in Sustainable Food Systems. He currently serves as Director of Sustainability & Strategic Partnerships at Adam's Group, a 100-year-old, family-owned company supplying organic oils, lecithin, grains, and seeds to the food, CPG, cosmetics, and agriculture industries. **Below, Taylor shares advice for current and future students as well as reflections and motivations for his current work.**



Masters of the Environment
University of Colorado **Boulder**

“The moments that really energize me are when big ideas become something everyone can rally around. Most recently, in my prior role as Sr. Manager of Sustainability & EHS at Traditional Medicinals, presenting our climate action plan to the executive team felt like one of those moments. The plan was informed by years of strategy work distilled into clear steps the whole company could own. Early on in my career, I was focused on proving I had the right answers. But over time, I've shifted toward helping the people around me become sustainability leaders themselves. Now I measure success by how many colleagues feel empowered to drive change, not just by how many projects I'm personally running. Healing people and our planet will take deep and relational collective effort.

I'm excited about my new role as Director of Sustainability at Adams Group because I have the opportunity to take what I learned at Traditional Medicinals, and build a new sustainability department from the ground up. In this role, I look forward to engaging with a broad network of farmers, CPG manufacturers, and retailers to scale impact across a wide range of stakeholders in the food system.”

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The sustainability narrative is also fragmenting. Some companies are pulling back on public commitments while others are doubling down. In both cases, it appears that most companies are being more cautious in how they talk about business sustainability. This means we as sustainability professionals have to adapt both our execution approach and communication skill sets. I see opportunity in the face of these changes, specifically, rapid learning and automation create new possibilities to engage in more meaningful work. New tools can empower us to master data and administrative challenges quickly, hopefully freeing up time for the face-to-face collaboration that actually creates on the ground change.

At Adams Group, I plan to use these technological shifts to our advantage by building digital tools paired with in-person engagements that deliver detailed impact data to our partners. These insights can guide strategic co-investments with farmers, customers, and suppliers to areas where reductions matter most. Technology will provide speed, and people will create meaningful change in the field.”

When asked to give advice to current or future MENV students, Taylor remarked,

“Treat the program as your networking launch pad. The coursework matters, but the relationships you build will open doors for years. Whenever there was a guest speaker, conference, or farm tour, I showed up, introduced myself, and got contact info.

Come prepared with thoughtful questions and always follow up with genuine notes that keep the conversation going. Think of networking as relationship-building, not transactions. Even if a connection isn't immediately useful, express gratitude. When a relationship proves valuable, stay in touch with updates that matter to both of you.” He also noted two courses as standouts during his time as a student. “The core Food Systems class gave me a systems-level view of how farmers, processors, retailers, and consumers all fit together. Our farm visits made the academic concepts discussed in class relatable. I look back on these practical insights whenever I'm mapping supply chain challenges.



Course recommendations include...

The Public Speaking elective was also immensely valuable. Our consistent work towards creating powerful presentations and clear communication built the confidence I now rely on when I'm briefing executives or speaking at industry events.

In addition to the coursework, my capstone project became an immediate springboard into my career. Working with a consulting firm on corporate sustainability disclosures meant I could apply those reporting and data collection skills on day one at Traditional Medicinals.

External to the program, Boulder's natural food community was like an informal master class. I volunteered at the Regenerative Earth Summit, went to Naturally Boulder events, and visited small farms, connecting with mentors I still keep in touch with today.”