



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Managing Crop Pests and Diseases in a Changing Environment

Leading sustainable farming organisation LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) and the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN) held an industry debate on 22 September to explore new thinking on managing crops and diseases in a changing economic, environment and social world.

Leading academics, researchers, farmers and government bodies attended the one day workshop and looked at opportunities for reducing losses caused by pests and diseases in crops. Speakers included Professor Peter Gregory Director of East Malling Research, Ed Moorhouse from G's Growers, Rob Cannings from Exosect Ltd, and Andy Shaw from the Satellite Applications Catapult.

Speaking at the event, LEAF Chief Executive, Caroline Drummond said:

“Reducing crop losses resulting from pests and diseases is becoming ever more important as the need for global food production continues to rise. Here in the UK, farmers and horticultural growers are facing highly challenging times due to pressures being brought to bear by an environment subject to technological, societal, regulatory, economic and climate change. Solutions to these challenges have to be addressed by taking a multi-disciplinary approach in order to bring new thinking and innovation into this complex and fluid picture.”

Key findings from the workshop included:

- Crops are vulnerable to pests and diseases and fragility is compounded by new species arriving via trade and climate change.
- This risks needs to be communicated better to consumers and politicians.
- Integration is key – new techniques such as biocontrol and satellite remote sensing all have a role to play, but there is no ‘silver bullet’.
- We need to adapt faster than the pests around us.
- Innovation is often crisis driven but there is an opportunity to be more proactive
- An understanding of the multi-dimensional situation is very important
- Collaboration within the industry is required

The event was supported by Syngenta who hosted the event at the Jealott's Hill International Research Centre.

**Notes for editors:**

1. The workshop was held at Jealott's Hill International Research Centre on 22 September.

2. Organisers:

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation promoting sustainable agriculture, food and farming. We help farmers produce good food, with care and to high environmental standards, identified in-store by the LEAF Marque logo. We build public understanding of food and farming in a number of ways. These include Open Farm Sunday, Let Nature Feed Your Senses and year round farm visits to our national network of Demonstration Farms.

[www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)

Knowledge Transfer Network Limited (KTN Ltd) is a not-for-profit company set up by the Technology Strategy Board to build on and improve the successful work of sector-specific knowledge transfer communities. We support and facilitate the interaction of industry and academics for the purpose of bringing innovative products and services to the market.

[www.connect.innovateuk.org](http://www.connect.innovateuk.org)

Syngenta is a world-leading agri-business committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology.

[www.syngenta.com](http://www.syngenta.com)

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