



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 24th March 2015

LEAF reports significant growth in global activity

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) has released its latest global impacts report which reveals continued growth in the area of crops grown on LEAF Marque certified businesses across the globe. In 2014, it broke through the 250,000 hectare barrier for the first time, standing at 266,324 hectares, representing a year on year increase of 7.8 per cent. The most significant growth was in Northern Europe, which saw a 29.8 per cent increase in the area of crops grown under the LEAF Marque standard system.

The LEAF Marque is an assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. It is based on LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM), which covers areas such as soil and water management, pollution control, energy efficiency and conservation. Farm businesses are independently measured and certified against the principles of IFM.

The report also highlights the substantial improvements made by LEAF Marque certified businesses across the globe in key aspects of sustainable farming. Measuring energy consumption has increased by 4.1 per cent to 168,481 hectares and there has been a 29.3 per cent increase (to 59,162 hectares) of crop which is benefitting from increasing stored water. Carbon footprint assessments have taken place across 102,164 hectares of crops on LEAF Marque certified businesses, representing a 9 per cent increase and there has been a 17.3 per cent increase in the hectares of crop on LEAF Marque certified businesses where nitrogen efficiency per tonne product is being measured, bringing it up to 125,961 hectares.

In the UK, a quarter of all home-grown fruit and vegetable production – including potatoes – is now grown to LEAF Marque standards. Foods which have seen the biggest uptake of the LEAF Marque include, British lettuce, of which 73 per cent is now LEAF Marque certified, apples (a third of UK apples are LEAF Marque certified) and 16 per cent of potatoes. The area of cereals grown to the standard has increased by 12 per cent to 126,963 hectares, making it the biggest LEAF Marque crop, ahead of horticulture for the first time. Wheat is the single largest LEAF Marque crop, with 69,673 hectares, but penetration remains at five per cent, providing a large market opportunity.

Positive gains were also seen in the livestock sector. The addition of a number of large pig units during 2014, meant that there was a 400 per cent increase in the number of animals on LEAF Marque certified businesses where a Livestock Health Plan is being actively applied.

LEAF's 'A Review of our 2014 Global Impacts' was formally launched at the International Food and Drink Event (IFE) on Tuesday 24th March.

Launching the report, Caroline Drummond, chief executive of LEAF said: “It is extremely encouraging to see significant growth in LEAF’s global reach during 2014. Through their implementation of Integrated Farm Management, LEAF members and LEAF Marque certified businesses are making significant progress to delivering more sustainable farming. The positive results highlighted in this report, have been achieved through collaboration across the food chain – with our members, LEAF Marque growers, our corporate partners and everyone who shares our vision of a world that is farming, eating and living sustainably. We will continue to strengthen these partnerships and to increase the positive impact of our work.

“This year we have launched our new LEAF Sustainable Farming Review which enables our farmer members to continually measure and benchmark their performance against sustainability indicators. We look forward to continuing our work with the food and farming industry to ensure that the sector is able to credibly and accurately assess, demonstrate and improve the sustainability of its products and its businesses.”

A copy of the report ‘A Review of our 2014 Global Impacts’ is available online at www.leafuk.org.

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LEAF Editors’ Notes:

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. LEAF works with farmers, the food industry, scientists and consumers to inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities.
- LEAF promotes Integrated Farm Management (IFM), a whole farm business approach that delivers more sustainable farming. IFM uses the best of modern technology and traditional methods to deliver prosperous farming that enriches the environment and engages local communities.
- The LEAF Marque is an assurance system recognising sustainably farmed products. It is based on LEAF’s Integrated Farm Management (IFM) principles. Farms in 33 countries worldwide are producing to the LEAF Marque Global Standard.
- All LEAF Marque certified farms are independently inspected to ensure they meet stringent criteria to demonstrate that food is being produced to high environmental standards. These criteria include soil management and fertility, crop health and protection, pollution control and by-products, energy and water efficiency, wildlife and landscape management and animal husbandry and the environment.