



MEDIA RELEASE

LEAF announces significant progress in sustainable farming

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) has revealed another year of significant progress in its mission to deliver more sustainable food and farming. The area of land around the world growing LEAF Marque crops increased by 28% since last year, according to the findings of its latest annual Global Impacts Report, which was launched today.

LEAF reports strong and steady growth in the number of LEAF Marque certified businesses across the globe, which now totals 992, representing 342,556 hectares in 37 countries. Worldwide, 137 different crops are grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses with cereals and horticulture being the two largest sectors.

In the UK alone, 33% of all fruit and vegetables are produced on LEAF Marque certified businesses, up from 25% the previous year. For some crops, the percentage is much higher – with the majority of leeks (88.6%), beetroot (76.3%), spring onions (75.5%), watercress (73.8%) and lettuce (70%) being grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses.

LEAF Chief Executive, Caroline Drummond MBE said: “The fact that one in three hectares of UK fruits and vegetables is grown by a LEAF Marque business is cause for celebration on its own but the results of our fourth Global Impacts Report are much greater than that. Farmers all over the world are continuing to invest in LEAF’s Integrated Farm Management as a way to not only make their businesses more profitable, but to address the future food needs of a growing population as well as safeguard the world’s precious resources. It is clear that LEAF members are making steady improvements in farming sustainably, with more businesses monitoring areas such as water use, soil management and crop health, and an increasing number of businesses communicating with staff and customers about sustainable farming.”

The report also highlighted the substantial improvements made by LEAF Marque certified businesses in key areas of sustainable farming. More businesses are now monitoring nitrogen efficiency (47% increase year-on year), carbon footprint (53% increase) and crop health – with a 44% increase in the number of LEAF Marque certified businesses taking steps to minimise damage to beneficial species. There was also a 12% increase in the number of LEAF Marque certified businesses who allocate a minimum of 5% land for habitat management.

Caroline Drummond added: “This growth and momentum, through the commitment of our members, is driving lasting change in the way our land is farmed, rewarding good practice and catalysing improvement where needed to meet the growing global demand for certified sustainably produced food. Our growers are making great strides in delivering more sustainable farming through the principles of Integrated Farm Management, and have been since our first report was published in 2012.

“Market demand for more sustainable food and farming is helping to drive positive change in how our land is farmed and managed. As more retailers and processors choose LEAF Marque certified products, more farmers will benefit from the opportunities that higher demand for sustainable food and farming can deliver.

“LEAF has always been an innovative organisation. As we look ahead to our next 25 years and beyond, we will continue to strengthen the rigour, transparency and credibility of our LEAF Marque standard, underpinned by the principles of the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice. We will continue to build on our evidence base on how our members are delivering positive outcomes for delivering more sustainable farming across the globe. The future is full of potential.”

LEAF’s 2016 Global Impacts Report - *Delivering More Sustainable Food and Farming* - was launched today at the inaugural LEAF Marque Summit. A copy of the report is available online at www.leafuk.org.

To commemorate its 25th year anniversary this year, LEAF will be holding a number of events. As well as the LEAF Marque Summit, other events include an Integrated Farm Management conference (19th May 2016) and a Consumer Engagement conference later

this year. LEAF also runs the annual Open Farm Sunday initiative, running this year on 5th June. For more information, please visit www.leafuk.org

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For more information, an interview or images, please contact:

Raman Sahota/ David Gough

LEAF Press Office

Ceres

T: 01189 475 956

E: Raman.sahota@ceres-pr.co.uk / david.gough@ceres-pr.co.uk

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 more sustainably farmed products. It is based on the sustainable farming principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM), which covers areas such as soil and water management, pollution control, crop health, animal welfare, community engagement, energy efficiency and landscape and nature conservation. LEAF Marque businesses are independently assessed and certified against the principles of IFM.
- LEAF is a full member of the ISEAL (**International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling**) Alliance, the global membership association for sustainability standards. Full membership is the highest membership status within ISEAL and demonstrates a high level of compliance with ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice, which are seen as global references for developing credible standards. The Codes of Good Practice cover standard setting, impact evaluation and assurance (certification and accreditation). Full members must adhere to the Code and are proven to be credible, effective and committed to continually improving their impacts.
- Open Farm Sunday is managed by **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)**. LEAF is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. It 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 has organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (LEAF is a registered [charity no: 1045781](#))