

## MEDIA RELEASE



### LEAF's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gets Up and Running

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of leading sustainable farming charity, LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming).



Set up in 1991, LEAF has grown to become a leading global organisation at the forefront of delivering more sustainable food and farming. Over the last 25 years, LEAF has led the way in driving forward the sustainability agenda, through its innovative management tools, the development of the LEAF Marque assurance system and its ground breaking public engagement and demonstration activities, all underpinned by the principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM).

LEAF's key achievements include:

- **Global reach driving sustainable food and farming worldwide:** LEAF currently operates in 33 countries across the globe, representing some 266,324 hectares of crop
- **Producing more sustainable fruit and vegetables in the UK:** 25% of UK fruit and vegetables are grown on LEAF Marque certified businesses
- **Developing market opportunities through LEAF Marque:** LEAF Marque, which was introduced in 2002, has grown to become a leading environmental assurance system. The logo can be seen on pack in stores across Britain. It recognises sustainably farmed products grown on farms which are independently inspected. Some 995 producers are farming to the LEAF Marque standard across the world.

- **Record breaking public engagement in food and farming:** LEAF's Open Farm Sunday is firmly established as the farming industry's annual open day. Since it began in 2006, it has enabled 1.6 million people to visit a farm to learn about where their food comes from.
- **Pushing forward the boundaries of IFM:** LEAF's network of Demonstration Farms and Innovation Centres now totals some 43 sites across the UK working to demonstrate IFM and carry out cutting edge research into its benefits and application.
- **Delivering sustainable farming across Europe:** LEAF was one of the founding members of EISA (European Initiative for Sustainable Development in Agriculture). An innovative partnership of Europe organisations working together to promote sustainable farming across Europe. The organisation has grown to include seven other EU countries.

LEAF began initially as a three year project led by Caroline Drummond, with a vision to 'promote the concept of Integrated Crop Management and to improve the public perception and understanding of modern agriculture'. Twenty-five years later, Caroline remains at the helm as Chief Executive, overseeing a team of fifteen.

Caroline said: "It's hard to believe LEAF is 25 years old. The phrase, 'from small acorns mighty oaks do go' could not be more pertinent. Equipped with only a desk, pencil and paper in a small room at the Royal Agricultural Society of England's offices at Stoneleigh Park, LEAF has grown to become a global force in delivering more sustainable food and farming."

"The world is a hugely different place than the one into which LEAF was born twenty-five years ago, but we remain firmly committed to our core values of delivering innovative solutions for farmers and engaging the public in farming. I am immensely proud of what we have achieved and hugely excited by the challenges that lie ahead. Together with our members, sponsors and industry partners, we will continue to break new ground in the pursuit of more sustainable farming systems."

As part of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, LEAF is planning a series of events encapsulating its theme for the year, 'Healthy Food and Farming Fit for the Future'. These include a number of fundraising activities, which started this month with a sponsored 5k run, followed by a sponsored mountain climb and cycle ride later in the year. There will also be a fundraising 'Farmers Day' in September.

Other events included as part of LEAF's 25th Anniversary include: LEAF Marque Summit (8th April 2016), Public Engagement Conference (6th May 2016), Open Farm Sunday (5th June 2016), Open Farm School Days (throughout June), House of Lords Think Tank (October 2016) and 25th Anniversary Dinner (19th October 2016).

For more information on LEAF and to support its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, please visit [www.leafuk.org](http://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.