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LEAF MARQUE SUMMIT POINTS WAY FORWARD FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING

The importance of assurance systems in delivering meaningful improvements for farmers and the environment, the positive impact of the LEAF Marque and the need for the supply chain to better communicate to consumers what sustainable farming is all about. These were the key messages from the LEAF Marque Summit which took place last week (22nd March).

The Summit, '**Metrics, Measurables and the Marketplace**', took place at The Odney Club in Berkshire and explored ways in which the farming industry can make positive changes in global food and farming systems.

A wide range of speakers from across the food, farming and research sectors explored pressing questions around the role of assurance systems – their efficiency, transparency and impact. Speakers also identified the ways in which assurance schemes in general, and LEAF Marque specifically, must continue to evolve and adapt in order to drive forward more sustainable farming.

Speakers at the LEAF Marque Summit included:

- **Tor Harris, Head of Sustainability & Responsible Sourcing, Waitrose** who highlighted the importance of sustainability to Waitrose including treading lightly on the environment, supporting responsible sourcing and treating people fairly.
- **Janet Dwyer, Professor of Rural Policy and Director of the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI)** who showcased recent research conducted by the CCRI which evaluated the positive impact and added value to farmers of LEAF Marque certification - including the fact that 97% of farmers who took part in the study, had reported that LEAF Marque certification had helped secure access to new opportunities.
- **Keston Williams, Technical Director, Barfoots** who showed how LEAF Marque certification now covers much of Barfoots' global production across a wide range of vegetables and is an essential aspect of the organisation's international supply chain.
- **Williams Andrews Tipper, Head of Natural Environment, Green Alliance** talked about the environmental challenges that will shape future land management in the UK and the role of



environmental assurance systems, such as LEAF Marque, as part of the solution for sustainable businesses in food and farming systems.

- **Verity Wilks, Responsible Sourcing Manager, Jordans & Ryvita Company** who explained to delegates the importance of the Jordans Farm Partnership, which is built on LEAF Marque certification.
- **Claire Donovan, Technical Director, G's Fresh** who outlined the importance of LEAF Marque certification in terms of environmental responsibility across all of the company's farm operations both in the UK and globally.

LEAF's Chief Executive Caroline Drummond, MBE and Sustainability Manager Kathryn Green also presented during the day.

There was a lively Q&A session with delegates keen to show their support for the LEAF Marque. One delegate asked: "Why don't all supermarkets use LEAF to communicate what sustainable farming is all about? Retailers are letting us down in getting the message across to consumers."

Tor Harris of Waitrose said that the retailer is always keen to promote the LEAF Marque and sustainable agriculture and that it takes on board that there are so many good news stories to talk about.

Other highlights included the launch of LEAF's Global Impacts Report 2018. The report reveals the huge amount of progress being made in delivering more sustainable food and farming through LEAF Marque certification in 34 countries across the globe.

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF, said: "We have a real opportunity to be a catalyst for change and secure the UK's position as a global leader when it comes to sustainable farming. Food is the new 'rock and roll' and we need to maximise public interest in it. We're delighted that so many industry leaders, LEAF members and farmers were able to join us at the LEAF Marque Summit to discuss and debate the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. At a time of great uncertainty, but also opportunity, for the industry, the event has brought together a congregation of experts intent on finding solutions to drive positive change, with sustainable farming at the heart of everything they do."

The LEAF Marque Summit was supported by Waitrose.



To see LEAF's live blog from the Summit, visit <https://leafuk.org/news-and-media/events/leaf-marque-summit>

To download a copy of the 2018 Global Impacts Report, visit <https://leafuk.org/about-leaf/our-impacts>

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For interview opportunities or further information please contact:

Simon Colvan / David Gough
LEAF Press Office - Ceres
T: 01189 475 956
E: leaf@ceres-pr.co.uk

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 environmental 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 Innovation Centres** are research organisations whose work supports the research, evidence, development and promotion of Integrated Farm Management. They investigate and communicate practices which underpin the continual improvement of the Integrated Farm Management approach to help deliver more sustainable food and farming. The network of LEAF Innovation Centres includes a range of research and education organisations across the UK.
- **LEAF Demonstration Farms** are commercial farms which show the beneficial practices of IFM to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM in order to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. The network of LEAF Demonstration Farms includes a range of farm businesses across the UK. They work alongside the LEAF Innovation Centres.



- **LEAF** manages **Open Farm Sunday**, the farming industry's annual open day when farmers open their gates and welcome people onto their farms to discover the world of farming. Next year's LEAF Open Farm Sunday will take place on 10th June 2018. Alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host **LEAF Open Farm School Days** which run throughout June. They provide thousands of school children with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.
- In June 2017, LEAF merged with **FACE (Farming And Countryside Education)** and is now leading a collaborative approach within the industry for better education and public engagement among consumers, children and young people.