



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **LEAF calls on industry to play its part in sustainable farming**

Our food future relies on sustainable farming, and the whole supply chain must play its part to ensure success. That was the message delivered at the inaugural LEAF Marque Summit, held earlier this month.

More than 70 attendees from across the food and farming industry, including LEAF Marque producers, and representatives from retailers, foodservice, packers, processors, and industry bodies came together at the event, which had the theme 'Demonstrating Sustainability in the Food Supply Chain.' Attendees heard about the value that the LEAF Marque has to retailers and suppliers in demonstrating sustainable credentials. LEAF Marque is a full member of the ISEAL Alliance. 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. Amy Jackson, Senior Manager, Learning and Membership at the ISEAL Alliance, who spoke at the summit said: "The LEAF Marque is a great example of a transparent and robust label that consumers should look out for."

At the summit, which was introduced this year as part of LEAF's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, LEAF also revealed the findings from its Global Impacts Report which showed that the area of land around the world growing LEAF Marque crops increased by 28% since last year. In the UK alone, 33% of all fruit and vegetables are produced on LEAF Marque certified businesses, up from 25% the previous year. Kathryn Mitchell, LEAF Sustainability Manager said: "We'd like to acknowledge the good work LEAF Marque producers across the globe are already doing, and we are proud of how responsible our farmers are. As a growing population, we have some challenges ahead, but through full supply chain collaboration, we look forward to continued sustainability success. We'd like to encourage more retailers and suppliers to recognise the value of LEAF Marque, and engage more producers in the supply chain."

Johnathan Sutton, Technical Manager, Marks and Spencer, also spoke at the conference and explained how the LEAF Marque is already providing value to them as a retailer, but also how producers already growing to LEAF Marque standards can benefit: "Our aim for 2020 is to be the most sustainable retailer in the world. Our journey includes Plan A at the heart of everything. I am really proud that we have adopted LEAF Marque as a Plan A attribute for producers, so if you are a LEAF Marque grower, you will be implementing Integrated Farm Management and you can apply and be awarded an attribute for every product you produce."

Sarah-Jane Thompson, Fresh Direct, was another conference speaker to acknowledge how LEAF Marque is already playing a part in helping the organisation be a sustainable supplier: "More consumers are keen to buy sustainable produce in food service and are willing to pay more for it. Total transparency is important as is responsible procurement, which is why some of our produce is already LEAF Marque certified."

The summit also explored other challenges faced by the food and farming industry including healthy eating and climate change. Sue Dibb, Coordinator of Eating Better: for a fair, green, healthy future, said: "There is a big awareness gap; particularly low levels of awareness of the sustainability impacts of our diet and how food has anything to do with climate change. Food and agriculture do need to play a more active role in meeting climate change targets - we can't avoid dangerous climate change unless consumption trends change."

To commemorate its 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary this year, LEAF will be holding a number of other events. As well as the LEAF Marque Summit, other events include an Integrated Farm Management conference (19<sup>th</sup> May 2016) and a Consumer Engagement conference (12<sup>th</sup> September 2016). LEAF also holds the annual Open Farm Sunday initiative, running this year on 5<sup>th</sup> June. For more information, please visit [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)

**ENDS**

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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 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 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. For more information on the ISEAL Alliance, visit [www.iseal.org](http://www.iseal.org)
- 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](#))