

LEAF announces strategic direction for 2016 – 2021

On June 15th, LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) announced its strategic direction for the next five years. The announcement, made at Cereals 2016, reveals LEAF's plans to build on its accomplishments and strengthen its core objectives to position itself as the go-to organisation for the delivery of more sustainable food and farming.

As LEAF celebrates its 25th anniversary and the news that consumer recognition of the LEAF Marque has risen significantly from 9% in 2014 to 15% in 2016, the announcement indicates exciting expansion plans for the organisation and a significant increase in its capability and capacity.



LEAF's five enabling objectives are:

- **Tripling** LEAF's capability over the next five years to deliver its work and outreach
- **Increasing** the adoption of more sustainable farming practices through Integrated Farm Management
- **Improving** industry recognition and demand for sustainably sourced products
- **Leading** a collaborative approach within the industry for better public engagement among consumers
- **Positively** influencing consumer attitudes towards knowledge of food, farming and the environment

The strategy will focus on more effectively delivering LEAF's overall mission 'To inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities.'

LEAF is aiming to reinforce its commitment to all stakeholders including positioning LEAF Marque as the most sought after mark of sustainability among the world's farmers. It will also strengthen its membership offering in the fresh produce, arable and livestock sectors and build its consumer engagement activities. This will be achieved through demonstration activities, management tools, and strengthening work with LEAF's Network of Demonstration Farms and Innovation Centres to increase the evidence of the impact of Integrated Farm Management to the delivery of more sustainable farming.

LEAF will also look to identify partnerships within the food, farming, environment, health and education sectors to build on the added value opportunities for farmers around the health agenda – in line with LEAF's theme: 'Healthy food and farming – fit for the future.' Moving forward, LEAF will be playing a critical role in facilitating farming's engagement in providing some of the solutions to current health challenges facing an increasingly urban society.

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive at LEAF said: "LEAF is at an exciting and important juncture. Reflecting on our progress over the last 25 years, we have clearly defined the principles of sustainable farming, built a range of management tools and services to help farmers deliver it and gain market recognition through LEAF Marque. We are also hugely proud of the success of our public engagement activities such as Open Farm Sunday. We are now in an excellent position to build on this work. Our priorities over the next five years will be to build LEAF Marque and its public recognition, strengthen our knowledge exchange activities, grow our membership offer and lead innovative ways to increase public trust and understanding of agriculture."

Open Farm Sunday, which took place this year on 5th June, saw over 250,000 members of the public visit a hosting farm. To continue this and to build on public respect for farming, the organisation will look to increase understanding of the work farmers do and the impact farming has on consumers' everyday lives by building on core activities including Open Farm Sunday, LEAF Marque, Speak Out and Virtual Farm Walk. Through this, LEAF will look to increase public recognition and demand for sustainably sourced produce.

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