LEAF Annual Conference 2024

Pathways to Sustainability - Scaling the Transition of Global Agriculture

Thursday 1st February 2024
BNP Paribas UK Headquarters, London

Our grateful thanks to Strutt & Parker for hosting this event, and to Frontier and Oxbury for their support:
Welcome

Farmers across the globe are having to respond to increasingly extreme weather events. Rising average temperatures, along with changing precipitation patterns, are substantially impacting the production of crops and livestock. Farming is on the front line of climate change.

LEAF’s Annual Conference, hosted by BBC broadcaster and journalist, Tom Heap, will bring together an expert panel of speakers to:

- Examine the pathways to promote sustainable farm management practices globally and the importance of Integrated Farm Management in that context.
- Explore the role of data as both a guide to intervention and tool for reporting.
- Identify the incentives, motivations, interactions and roles of public, private and civil society actors in facilitating the transition at pace and scale.
- Consider the role of financial markets as catalysts to incentivise more sustainable farm management practices.
- Explore the role that livestock can play within a sustainable farming system.

ARRIVAL AND REFRESHMENTS

10:00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Philip Wynn, LEAF Chair
David Webster, LEAF Chief Executive

10:20

PANEL 1:

At COP 28 Heads of Government and State affirmed “that agriculture and food systems must urgently adapt and transform in order to respond to the imperatives of climate change.” In that context, this panel will explore the specific role of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) in scaling the transition to more sustainable farming.

What is Integrated Farm Management and why does this approach to sustainable farm management matter in the context of scalability?

Dr. Alastair Leake
Director of Policy, The Allerton Project, a LEAF Innovation Centre
The application of specific IFM principles in practice and their potential positive impact – specifically in the context of IPM.

Professor Rosemary Collier
Professor of Integrated Pest Management, University of Warwick

The global impact of IFM approaches on rice. Specifically, for significantly reducing methane emissions through the adoption of wet / dry farming techniques.

Wyn Ellis
Sustainable Rice Platform

Jop Blom
Sustainable Rice Platform

The application of IFM at a global scale. How Tesco are working with farmers to help drive sustainable farm management practices across their global fresh produce supply chain.

James Bradshaw
Head of Technical, Produce and Horticulture, Tesco

Q&A PANEL DISCUSSION:

With our Panel 1 speakers, plus contributions from:

Tom Green
LEAF Marque Chair and former CEO Spearhead International Ltd.

Tom Parker
Head of Customer Digital Solutions Frontier Agriculture

11:30 PANEL 2:

Evolving insights into livestock and sustainable farming

Last year, Professor Mike Berners Lee challenged those present at this conference to reduce the overall number of livestock in the global food system. This year we will be asking, is there any role for livestock in a global sustainable farming system and if so, what does this sector look like in practice?

PANEL 2 PRESENTATIONS:

What is the role of Waitrose in encouraging more sustainable livestock systems within their supply chain? How has Leckford made its own beef farming system more sustainable?

Andrew Hoad
Head of Leckford Estate and LEAF Demonstration Farmer

What could a policy approach look like (both in the UK and globally)? What types of livestock farming should we be supporting or challenging and why?

Tara Garnett
Director of TABLE, University of Oxford

Why do livestock farming systems matter and what changes to livestock production systems need to be made to promote greater sustainability?

Ffinlo Costain
Editor in Chief of 8point9.com and sustainable farming advocate
What are the global risks associated with livestock production and the evidence pointing towards what a sustainable livestock system might look like?

Professor Jude Capper
Livestock sustainability consultant, ABP Chair and Professor of Sustainable Beef and Sheep Production at Harper Adams University, a LEAF Innovation Centre

12:30 Q&A PANEL DISCUSSION

With our Panel 2 speakers, plus contributions from:

Vicky Robinson
AIC Head of Sustainability (formerly LEAF Director, Technical)

Dan Stevenson MRCVS
LEAF IFM Manager

13:00 LUNCH

14:00 KEYNOTE: LEAF LECTURE WITH Q&A

Professor Jacqueline McGlade will outline the scientific evidence around carbon measurement and capture within the context of global farming systems. She will also set out the challenges we face as society to decarbonise and adjust to changing weather patterns and stem loss of wildlife rich habitat.

Professor Jacqueline McGlade
Chief Scientist and Co-founder of DownForce Technologies; Professor of Sustainable Development & Resilience, University College London


This panel will refocus the debate back onto global farming practices, exploring differing perspectives on the value and importance of soils. We will examine how farm businesses, financial markets and food producers can engage with the complex truth about soils in both a global farming and commercial management context.

PANEL 3 PRESENTATIONS:

The case for soil management in the context of effective and sustainable farming practices – why does soil matter so much and, ultimately, what is the real value of good soil management practice to farm businesses?

Professor Jane Rickson
Cranfield University and LEAF Board member

What are the implications of emerging markets for both soil carbon sequestration (insets / offsets) and Biodiversity Net Gain on farm businesses in the UK and globally?

Jonathan Armitage
Head of Farming, Strutt & Parker
The rationale for adopting zero till farming practices, key learnings and commercial and environmental benefits. What are the complexities that need to be addressed in management practices, the importance of taking a long term approach and does it resonate with consumers?

Duncan Farrington
Managing Director, Farrington Oils Ltd. and LEAF Demonstration Farmer

Speakers

Jop Blom
Sustainable Rice Platform

Jop Blom has over two decades of experience in international sustainable entrepreneurship, partnerships and trade on almost all continents as well as his with his own ventures in Europe, Africa and Latin America. Since 2021 Jop is supporting the Sustainable Rice Platform to create more awareness and engagement on sustainable rice amongst retail and the food industry in Europe. And with success as many top retail chains started to include SRP Verified Rice in their tender requirements which is pushing demand in the value chain and availability in already 20+ European countries.

Jonathan Armitage
Head of Farming, Strutt & Parker

Jonathan is a highly experienced farming, rural business and property consultant and manager with over 30 years’ experience as a qualified Rural Practice Chartered Surveyor. He has unique experience of leading strategic change in major farming businesses.

Jonathan has a degree in Agriculture from University of Reading and is a qualified Chartered Surveyor and Professional Fellow of the Institute of Agricultural Management. He rejoined Strutt & Parker in 2021 to lead their team of farming consultants having spent 14 years running their farming consultancy in the East Midlands and 9 nine years, after that, leading the Agribusiness team at Bidwells.

Jonathan has spent 30 years advising farming and rural property businesses on behalf of private individuals, family trusts and investment funds. He has acquired a considerable breadth of knowledge in these roles which is key for our clients entering a significant period of change for Agricultural businesses.

James Bradshaw
Head of Technical, Produce and Horticulture, Tesco

After completing the MDS graduate programme in 2012, during which he spent two years working in a wide range of supply and retail environments, covering technical, procurement and operations, James joined Tesco in 2013 as Produce Technologist. He is now Head of Technical – Produce and Horticulture and is closely involved in driving the roll out of LEAF Marque certification across Tesco’s UK and global fresh produce supply base. All of Tesco’s nearly 500 UK fruit and veg growers are now LEAF Marque certified and the rest of its 8,000 strong global grower base will be certified by 2025.
Jude Capper
Livestock Sustainability Consultant, ABP Chair and Professor of Sustainable Beef and Sheep Production at Harper Adams University, a LEAF Innovation Centre

Professor Jude L. Capper, PhD, DSc (h.c.) ARAgS is the ABP Chair of Sustainable Beef and Sheep systems at Harper Adams University (HAU) in Shropshire, UK; and is also an independent Livestock Sustainability Consultant. Jude’s research focuses on modelling the sustainability of livestock production systems, specifically dairy, beef and sheep. She is passionate about the role of ruminant livestock in improving One Health for people, animals and the environment, and believes that we all have our part to play in finding applicable, appropriate, adoptable solutions to improving sustainability.

Tim Coates
Farmer and Co-founder of Oxbury Bank

Tim Coates is a 3rd generation farmer and co-Founder of Oxbury Bank - the UK’s only specialist bank for agriculture. Tim is Director of the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster, Chair of the Evenlode Landscape Recovery project and sits on the Boards of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership and Silvasheep. Tim is a LEAF member and his farm participates in Rothamsted’s AgZero+ research programme into carbon-neutral food production and is joining the UKRI/EU Horizon Climate Farm Demo programme as a pilot demonstration farm.

Rosemary Collier
Professor of Integrated Pest Management, University of Warwick

Rosemary is interested in food production and the natural environment, and much of her research is focused on the management of pest insects in horticultural crops, using approaches that minimise environmental impact. Rosemary is also interested in the use of information by farmers, growers and gardeners, including novel technologies for forecasting, monitoring and managing pests, and the use of information gathered by citizen scientists. Aside from her working life, she has recently been involved in the coordination of a network of wildlife friendly community groups in Warwickshire and in helping to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county.

Ffinlo Costain
Editor in Chief 8point9.com and sustainable farming advocate

Ffinlo is the Chief Editor of 8point9.com and has worked in farming, land and food business policy for over 20 years. As Chief Executive of Farmwel (2016-2022) he gave evidence to UK parliamentary committees, advised ministers and the Committee on Climate Change on the role of agricultural climate gases, and worked with FAI Farms to deliver the Regen Dairy project on behalf of international dairy brands. Ffinlo has presented at the European Parliament, advised ministers and senior leadership teams in many European countries, and he chaired the Farming in Protected Landscapes funding panel for Cranborne Chase AONB (2021-2023).

Wyn Ellis
Executive Director, Sustainable Rice Platform

Dr Wyn Ellis is Executive Director of the Sustainable Rice Platform, having served throughout SRP’s formative stages since 2013. He has 38 years’ experience in agricultural development in Asia, working with bilateral and multilateral development partners, governments, academia, the private sector and NGOs. His specific expertise includes agro-innovation, sustainable food systems, pest management and climate change.

With a Ph.D. from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and a M.A from Oxford University, UK, he has authored a number of academic publications and book chapters and has served on the Editorial Board of several international journals.

Duncan Farrington
Managing Director, Farrington Oils Ltd and LEAF Demonstration Farmer

Duncan Farrington is a farmer and founder of Farrington’s Mellow Yellow cold pressed rapeseed oils and dressings. He is a LEAF Demonstration farmer and LEAF Marque grower committed to sustainable farming, from wildlife habitats around fields, to healthy soils within fields. In 2020 Farrington Oils became the world’s first food business to be certified as carbon and plastic neutral and, received a Queen’s Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development in 2021. Duncan is the UK case study for the AgricaptureCO₂ project, which aims to develop an internationally accepted metric for soil carbon sequestration and regenerative farming practices.
Tara Garnett
Director of TABLE, University of Oxford

Tara is a researcher at the University of Oxford, and the Director of TABLE, a platform for knowledge and dialogue on the future of food.

Tara’s work centres on the interactions among food, climate, health and broader sustainability issues; she has a particular interest in livestock as a sector where many of these converge. She is also interested in how knowledge is communicated to and interpreted by policy makers, civil society organisations and industry, and in the values that these different stakeholders bring to food problems and possible solutions.

Tom Green
LEAF Marque Chairman

Formerly CEO of Spearhead International Ltd, farming over 90,000 ha in UK and Central Europe, Tom now advises several farming businesses and AgTech organisations. “Harnessing technology and best practice to farm with nature”, Tom’s focus is on sustainable productivity.

Andrew Hoad
Head of Leckford Estate and LEAF Demonstration Farmer

Andrew has run Leckford Estate, Waitrose farm since 2014 and is a member of the Waitrose Commercial Leadership Team. Andrew joined JLP 19 years previously having spent over a decade at Sainsbury’s. Andrew has broad senior management and leadership experience in retail buying, strategy and insight, store development, operational strategy and customer experience. Leckford Estate is a diverse business, as well as mixed farming enterprises it has various leisure, retail, food processing and property businesses. Andrew is also a Director of the Test & Itchen Association and a Trustee of the John Lewis Foundation.

Alastair Leake
Director of Policy, The Allerton Project, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

Dr Alastair Leake has a BSc in Horticultural Science and PhD in Organic & Integrated Farming Systems. He worked for 20 years for the Co-operative Farms, ultimately heading up the company’s ground-breaking farming systems research. He is now head of GWCT’s 300 ha Allerton Research & Demonstration farm in Leicestershire.

In 2023 Alastair received The Royal Agricultural Society’s National Agricultural Award given annually in recognition of an outstanding individual contribution to the advancement of agriculture in the United Kingdom.

Jacqueline McGlade
Professor, Sustainable Development & Knowledge Systems, University College London

Jacqueline is Co-founder and Chief Scientific for Downforce Technologies Ltd., delivering digital twin data services in the UK, Australia, Kenya and USA for agriculture, land management and natural capital programmes. She is currently Professor of Sustainable Development and Resilience at the Institute for Global Prosperity and Faculty of Engineering at University College London, UK, and Professor of International Public Policy and Governance at Strathmore University Business School, Kenya. She is an Essex Climate Change Commissioner and on the Advisory Boards of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and UK Space Agency.

Previously she was UN Environment Chief Scientist and Chief Statistician; Executive Director of the European Environment Agency; Director of the UK Natural Environment Research Council Centre for Coastal and Marine Sciences; Frank Jackson Professor of the Environment at Gresham College; Board Member of the Environment Agency (England and Wales); Professor of Biological Sciences, University of Warwick; and a senior government scientist in Germany and Canada. She has published more than 200 research publications and books, produced award winning films and radio series (Planet reThink, Our Arctic Challenge, Environmental Film Atlas, Sustaining Life, The Life Scientific) and has received many awards for her climate, health and environmental research.

Tom Parker
Head of Customer Digital Solutions, Frontier Agriculture

Tom has worked at the forefront of food and farming technology in UK agriculture for the last 22 years. His role at Frontier is to help develop solutions that harness the power of data and digital to drive business improvement across the arable supply chain; from farmer to grain consumer/food producer.

During his career he has managed a number of businesses at the highest level with responsibility for both strategy and implementation. Tom has developed technological solutions both in the UK and abroad, across fertiliser, grain, precision crop production, and agronomy. Tom’s clients have included land managers, farmers, agronomists, farm advisors, waste and water companies, government agencies, and multi-national companies.

Tom also runs a diversified farm business in South Hertfordshire.
Vicky Robinson
Head of Sustainability, AIC

Vicky Robinson is Head of Sustainability at Agriculture Industries Confederation and is leading the trade association’s sustainability work. A 2019 Nuffield Scholar, Vicky was previously Technical Director at Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF), which followed 22 years working for Natural England and its predecessors on agri-environment delivery, policy development and implementation.

Vicky’s role at AIC includes updating AIC’s Agri-Supply Roadmap for a Sustainable Food Chain, as well as supporting the recently-launched Sustainability Self-Assessment Framework, and helping Member businesses with the net zero transition.

Dan Stevenson MRCVS
IFM Manager, LEAF

Dan recently joined LEAF as IFM Manager having spent 19 years in the veterinary sector, during which he was Clinical Director at LLM Farm Vets. With a passion for connecting soil, plant, animal and environmental health, Dan has worked with multiple teams and stakeholders to deliver positive change. He has spoken at Groundswell in addition to involvement in national discussion groups and farm trials.

David Webster
LEAF Chief Executive

David joined LEAF as Chief Executive Officer in September 2023. Before this, he was Director of Sustainability and External Affairs for the UK Grocery Division of Associated British Foods (ABF) and joined ABF via Jordans (Cereals) Ltd. He worked closely with founders Bill and David Jordan to publicise the Jordans breakfast cereal brand and its longstanding commitment to wildlife friendly farming. Jordans was acquired by ABF in 2008 and David subsequently went on to lead sustainability for the Jordans & Ryvita Company, before being promoted to the position of Divisional Director in 2017. He was closely involved in the formation of the highly respected Jordans Farm Partnership, through which he worked alongside longstanding farm suppliers to the Jordans business together with LEAF, the Wildlife Trusts and The Prince’s Countryside Fund.

Philip Wynn OBE
LEAF Chair and Director, Dyson Farming

With a career spanning over 50 years Philip has managed and advised businesses in nearly every sector of agriculture. He has been a Director of Dyson Farming since it was formed in 2013 and has a number of other Directorships across the food and farming sector. He is a financial and strategic adviser to a number of large scale vegetable, potato and arable business. Philip has had a long connection with LEAF, having been Manager of the Neville Estate in Lincolnshire, one of LEAF’s first Demonstration farms. He has been Chairman of LEAF since 2017.
LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)
Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire, CV8 2LG

LEAF is a registered charity (No. 1045781)

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