



MEDIA RELEASE

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LEAF MARQUE GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

At a time when consumers, the food and farming industry and government, both at home and abroad, are focusing more than ever on environmental issues, LEAF's latest Global Impacts Report has once again revealed the substantial progress being made in delivering more sustainable farming through LEAF Marque certification.

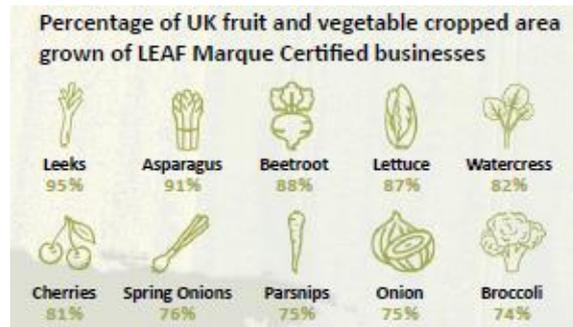
The report, which was launched at the annual LEAF Marque Summit today (22nd March), shows continued growth in productivity. Significant growth was made in the livestock sector, with an increase of more than 3,500 sheep and cattle reared on LEAF Marque certified businesses compared with last year, and more than 15,000 ha of permanent or temporary grassland grown. The report also highlights the diversity of the assurance system, revealing that 162 different crop types and livestock classes are produced by LEAF Marque certified businesses.

In total, there are 1,032 LEAF Marque certified businesses, operating in 34 countries across the globe from Chile to New Zealand. Over the past 12 months, the area of crop produced by these businesses has grown by more 19,000 ha (an area larger than the city of Glasgow) to a total of 386,500 ha, with the UK accounting for 81% - 314,500 ha - of this. Fifty-one percent of the crop was cereal, with 43% horticulture. The top five crops grown were wheat (98,200 ha), barley (34,500 ha), potato (32,600 ha), oilseed rape (27,300 ha) and lettuce (11,200 ha).

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF, said: "We are delighted with the progress we have made and are seeing some real and lasting change in the resilience, productivity and health of farmland across the globe delivering public goods. Our Global Impacts Report demonstrates how a credible, market-based, independent, science and evidence-based assurance system like LEAF Marque can help drive forward strong connections between farmers, consumers and the wider supply chain."



In the UK, LEAF Marque's prominence in the fresh produce sector grew yet again, with 36% of UK fruit and vegetables now grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses, up from 25% just three years ago. For some produce, virtually all UK crop was LEAF Marque certified including leeks (95%), asparagus (91%), beetroot (88%) and lettuce (87%).



Many crops were grown to LEAF Marque standards for the first time, including bilberry, curry leaves, pulses, macadamia and sunflowers.

The report also highlighted how farms are following sustainable farming practices under LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM), with every LEAF Marque certified business implementing responsible environmental practices. The importance of soil health has been recognised with four in ten farms recording soil organic matter, compared with just one in three a year ago. Other precious resources are also carefully managed with 44% of LEAF Marque certified businesses having one or more types of renewable energy, and 51% carrying out waste management best practice.

Biodiversity, biosecurity and conservation practices, all key parts of Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan, were also measured as part of the report. Steps were being taken to minimise damage to beneficial species and non-target organisms on 339,500 ha of crops – accounting for 88% of all crop grown on LEAF Marque certified businesses. This was up 13% from 300,000 ha in the previous year.

Nearly 6.8 million metres of hedges are managed on LEAF Marque certified businesses, enough to stretch from London to Nairobi. As well as planting hedges and trees, other ways businesses are improving on-farm biodiversity include creation of ponds and ongoing management of reservoirs, field margins and habitat banks.

Caroline Drummond added: "With the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals providing an important focus for delivering a better, more sustainable world, the work of LEAF and our members plays a key part in translating them into meaningful change on the ground. The challenges the sector



faces are many, but so is the potential for transformation. Going forward we will be strengthening our relationship with our members, in the UK and overseas, to ensure the LEAF Marque assurance system continues to provide benefit across a range of farm types and geographical locations. We know for example that there is great opportunity for the meat and dairy sectors to be further recognised for their environmental contribution, and the growth of LEAF Marque in these areas provides a unique opening for farmers to develop their markets.”

The results were released at the annual LEAF Marque Summit. The third summit, explored the theme ***Metrics, Measurables and the Marketplace*** and examined some of the pressing questions about the role of assurance schemes in delivering meaningful improvements for farmers and the environment. As well as LEAF, speakers included representatives from Waitrose, Countryside and Community Research Institute, Barfoots of Botley, Green Alliance, Jordans & Ryvita, and G’s Fresh.

To see the report in full visit www.leafuk.org

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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.