

Tuesday 31st October

Jersey chooses LEAF Marque to deliver more sustainable farming

Jersey's dairy and arable farmers are being asked to become LEAF Marque certified as part of the Island's new rural support scheme, which requires them to follow internationally recognised sustainable farming practices. Under the Rural Economy Strategy 2017 - 2021, which aims to grow Jersey's rural economy while safeguarding its countryside and environment, farmers must be LEAF Marque certified by 2019.

The LEAF Marque is an environmental assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products and is underpinned by the sustainable farming principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM). A number of LEAF's technical team recently visited Jersey to meet with farmers to discuss LEAF Marque requirements and offer training in topics such as soil management and fertility, pollution control, animal husbandry, energy efficiency and nature conservation. The training, funded by Jersey's Department of the Environment, was well received by farmers.

More than half (approx. 6,000 hectares) of land on Jersey is used for agriculture, including land farmed by potato growers the Jersey Royal Company who are already a LEAF Marque certified member. Jersey's Director of Rural Economy and Head of Plant Health, Scott Meadows, said: "The industry has responded very positively to the LEAF scheme and there was a really good turnout for the training. Farmers are already up to speed with many of the requirements as they had to comply with them under a previous rural support scheme, but LEAF covers subjects in more depth and has a broader set of requirements. It gets farmers thinking about how they can farm to the best possible standards, with biodiversity, public goods, and sustainability being held in equal regard to profit. Our aim during the five year span of the scheme is to move to a model where government is directly purchasing public goods from land managers in exchange for financial and innovation support. The public goods highest up the agenda are improved water quality, biodiversity and sustainability."

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive of LEAF said: "We're delighted that the LEAF Marque assurance system has been chosen by the government of Jersey to help drive forward its vision of a sustainable, diverse and innovative agricultural industry. We know from independent research* that LEAF Marque certification delivers a range of economic, environmental and social benefits. It empowers and enables farmers to make positive changes to more sustainable farming and allows them to celebrate and demonstrate their achievements in the marketplace. We are greatly looking forward to working

together with the government of Jersey and the Island's farmers to support the wider strategic needs of Jersey, with regards to sustainable food production, water security and the quality of the environment."

Jersey's Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, Senator Lyndon Farnham added: "I'm pleased to see the new scheme beginning to deliver what it set out to do - to grow the rural economy while safeguarding Jersey's countryside and environment. To do this, we've had to rewrite the contract government has with farmers, and I think that it will produce a more sustainable future for the agricultural sector."

In addition to the new rural scheme in Jersey, LEAF's farming methods are also being recognised by other organisations including retailers and levy boards. Waitrose, which requires all fresh produce suppliers to be LEAF Marque certified, has put LEAF Marque at the centre of their consumer marketing activity. Meanwhile, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) will be using the LEAF Sustainable Farming Review on-line management tool as part of its efforts to measure its Strategic Farm's economic, environmental and social performance.

For more information on the LEAF Marque visit: <https://leafuk.org/farming/leaf-marque>

* Independent research carried out by Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) <https://leafuk.org/news-and-media/research/leaf-marque-independent-research-carried-our-by-countryside-and-community-research-institute-ccri>