



MEDIA RELEASE

SAFE AND SOUND? LEAF ANNUAL CONFERENCE DISCUSSES THE CURRENT STATE OF FOOD PROTECTION, SECURITY AND DEFENCE

Yesterday, over 90 delegates from across the food and farming industry, including suppliers, farmers, researchers, industry representatives and government officials, came together for the LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) Annual Conference at Barclays in Canary Wharf, to discuss the risks, solutions and opportunities available for delivering a more resilient food and farming system. The event titled, 'Safe and Sound? Food - Protection, Security and Defence' offered a unique insight into the current state of food protection, security and defence in the UK and across the globe.

Chaired by Tom Heap, Environment and Rural Affairs Broadcaster, the event highlighted how the food supply chain is becoming increasingly complex and raised the discussion around the risks of intentional and unintentional contamination and vulnerability to our food supplies. Speakers talked passionately about the issues around consumer trust, expectations and safety in the food they buy and eat and how it is produced. They also examined what steps need to be taken to reduce the impact of food system vulnerability from growing incidences of 'food fraud', 'food crime' and 'misrepresentation' and how to build consumer confidence.

Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive said: "To ensure we optimise the capabilities of our food supply chain now and in the future, we need to ensure that we are sharing knowledge, utilising research and development and working together. There is also a need for us, as an industry, to address the issues around consumer trust in the food they buy. This is where food assurance schemes, like LEAF Marque, have a key role to play. As a leading global assurance system, LEAF Marque, recognises and rewards sustainable farming practices through building market and consumer awareness and demonstrating high standards of environmental care. Assurance schemes also empower consumers to make positive changes through their purchasing decisions."

Minette Batters, NFU President said: "While incidences of food crime have far-reaching impacts on the agricultural sector, the vulnerability of crops and livestock to pests and diseases, and the

authenticity of inputs and the demonstration of best practice, all play their part. Which is why it is critical for the farming sector to demonstrate its value and integrity to the consumer.”

Philip Wynn, LEAF Chairman, delivered a concise and informative speech, which set the scene for the day. Philip explained that “With an estimated 9 billion extra mouths to feed by 2050¹, the need for us to identify the threats and vulnerabilities in our food and farming sector, and create a solution for these risks, is vital. The complexity and integrity of our food supply chain creates a further challenge, however, with new technology and with a united approach, there is no doubt that the farming industry can work together to encourage the change, opportunity and innovation needed to ensure our food chain is strong and resilient for years to come.”

Professor Guy Poppy, Chief Scientific Adviser, Food Standards Agency highlighted some of the science behind the threats to the UK’s food system and where policies, artificial intelligence and regulation can help. Specifically, Guy explained the importance of new technologies and methods, such as Blockchain, which has had a big impact on the food and farming industry, as a quick and secure way to share information. Delegates also heard about what the Food Standards Agency is doing to protect and defend the nation’s food.

In addition, attendees also enjoyed talks from Brian Irwin, Chairman, Irwin’s Bakery Northern Ireland; Andy Mitchell, Category Manager, Sainsbury’s as well as a variety of discussion sessions with expert panel speakers focusing on issues around risk management, mitigation strategies and building consumer confidence.

Speaker presentations, photographs and commentary from the event are available at <https://leafuk.org/news-and-media/events/leaf-annual-conference-2018>

For more information, an interview or images, please contact:

Cat Cambridge / David Gough
LEAF Press Office - Ceres
T: 01189 475 956
E: leaf@ceres-pr.co.uk

Editors’ Notes:

- **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)** is a 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 uses the best of modern technology and traditional methods to deliver more sustainable farming. IFM is made up of nine sections, which together address the entire farm business. These include soil and water management, pollution control, crop health and protection, animal welfare, community engagement, energy efficiency and landscape and nature conservation.
- **The LEAF Marque** is a leading global assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. It is underpinned by the sustainable farming principles of IFM. **LEAF Marque** certified businesses are independently verified against the LEAF Marque Standard.
- The LEAF Network includes **LEAF Demonstration Farms** – commercial farms in England and Scotland, which show the beneficial practices of IFM to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. The LEAF Network also includes **LEAF Innovation Centres** – research organisations from across the UK whose work supports the research, evidence, development and promotion of IFM.
- **LEAF Education** builds on the work of FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) following its merger with LEAF in July 2017. It works to inspire future generations about farming, food and the countryside. It manages a number of industry and educational initiatives, including FaceTime a Farmer, Access to Farms, CEVAS (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme), Countryside Classroom, Chef on the Farm and LEAF Open Farm School Days.
- **LEAF Education** provides teachers with curriculum focused training, tools and resources to help them deliver high-quality learning experiences about farming. It also helps farmers navigate the world of education and supports them in delivering inspiring and engaging on-farm and in-classroom activities.
- **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. Alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host **LEAF Open Farm School Days** which run throughout June. They provide thousands of schoolchildren with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.

LEAF, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. CV8 2LG t: 02476 413911 e: enquiries@leafuk.org
www.leafuk.org LEAF is a registered charity (No. 1045781) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No. 3035047).

ⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/oct/13/agriculture-farming-food-addiction-meat-harvest-hungry-world>