New study demonstrates the value of the
LEAF Marque beyond certification

Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF), responsible for one of the world’s leading environmental assurance systems, has today published findings from a report showing the value of LEAF Marque certification in developing and promoting more sustainable farming and food systems across the globe.

The new independent study, which is part of LEAF’s ongoing commitment to listening, adapting and improving, concluded that LEAF Marque goes beyond an environmental assurance system. Carried out by Mike Read Associates, the evaluation found that as well as providing added value to certified farmers in terms of increased gross margins, market opportunities, retailer engagement and earned recognition, LEAF Marque certification underpins all aspects of LEAF’s wider work. As such, LEAF Marque is a powerful catalyst for mobilising advances in more sustainable, climate positive farming across the globe.

The release of the report’s findings has been timed to coincide with the launch of LEAF’s new 30@30 campaign, which celebrates the organisation’s landmark 30th anniversary. 30@30 is an extensive, year-long programme of activities, events and initiatives highlighting LEAF’s achievements, paying tribute to the many people and organisations it has worked with and setting out its future vision for developing and promoting more climate positive global farming and food systems.

The study sets out ways in which LEAF Marque contributes to the broader enabling environment of LEAF’s work, including:

- Offering a robust, holistic core to farmers’ improvements, with third party assurance
- Helping support farmers’ position and respect with retailers
- Improving farm biodiversity, beauty and public image
- Providing a community of like-minded farmers to learn from each other
- Supporting risk and reputation management
- Quantification and independent verification of continuous improvement
- Increasing societal awareness of sustainable food production

While there were clear positive outcomes from the evaluation, there were also a number of key learnings, including growing recognition of the LEAF Marque logo and what it means, building on its carbon reduction offer, extending its range of support tools and expanding LEAF Marque’s reach into other sectors including dairy and livestock.

**Tom Green, LEAF Marque Chairman, said:**

“This is a vital time for sustainable farming. Farmers are on the front line of climate change solutions – reducing carbon emissions, building healthier and more productive soils, delivering better air and water quality and enhancing biodiversity. The findings of this study show that LEAF Marque certification is a powerful driver for change and provides an excellent route towards meeting the objectives of the 25-year Environment Strategy. LEAF Marque also contributes to a number of Sustainable Development Goals and, in the light of post-Brexit negotiations, it clearly demonstrates the ‘public good’ provided by certified farmers and growers. We are hugely encouraged by the conclusions of this study and the recognition it gives to the ever-increasing reach and impact of LEAF Marque, both in the UK and worldwide. There is no doubt that LEAF Marque certification is bringing about real and lasting change in more sustainable and climate smart food production.”

**Jennifer Clark, Assurance Manager at LEAF, added:**

“LEAF Marque certification is grounded in rigour and transparency; it is data driven and research led. Gaining insight into its impact is crucial for continuous improvement. Just as farms don’t stop improving once they become certified, so we are also continually improving to keep up with global best practice. We are committed to listening and adapting. This evaluation reinforces our view that every aspect of LEAF’s broader work is supported by LEAF Marque. It offers credibility, income and technical tools for farmers, supply chain actors and regulators. Overwhelmingly, its message is one of transformation and positive change. By working with farmers to reward and incentivise change, and with retailers and consumers to ensure a market for environmentally sustainable food, we are uniquely positioned to link landscape health with people’s lives and plates.”

To find out more about the LEAF independent evaluation, click [here](#):
In March, LEAF announced the significant impact of LEAF Marque in its latest Global Impacts Report, with nearly half (45%) of the UK’s fruit and vegetables being grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses. LEAF’s Global Impacts Report is available here

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Editors’ Notes:

About the evaluation:
This independent evaluation study was carried out by Mike Read Associates from November 2020 to March 2021. The objective of the study was to evaluate how LEAF Marque supports the ‘enabling environment’ for LEAF’s broader work. Methodology included semi-structured interviews with farmers, suppliers, retailers, brands, government agencies, consultants and members of the farming media. Interviews with LEAF staff and ISEAL members, literature review and a workshop with LEAF staff.

About LEAF:

- **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)** is the leading organisation delivering and promoting Climate Positive, thriving, resilient and exemplar agro-ecological farming at an increasingly global level. Working with farmers, the food industry, scientists, environmentalists, teachers, young people and consumers, we are looking at new ways to deliver productivity and prosperity among our farmers, enrich the environment and engage young people and society in a valuable and meaningful way.

- **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.

- **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 England and Scotland. They work alongside the LEAF Innovation Centres.

- **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 LEAF Marque** is a global 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 Open Farm Sunday** offers a chance for farmers to open their gates and welcome people onto their farms to discover the world of farming.

- **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 Education** manages a number of industry and educational initiatives, including Farmer Time, Access to Farms, CEVAS (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme), Countryside Classroom, Chef on the Farm and LEAF Open Farm School Days.