Growing LEAF Marque: Listening | Adapting | Improving

Gaining insight into the impact of LEAF Marque to the uptake of more sustainable farming is crucial for **continuous improvement**. That is why we invest in **monitoring and evaluation**. We regularly commission **independent impact evaluations** that provide vital insights into the impact of our work and how we need to continually respond, improve and adapt. Research guides our way forward.

THE STUDY

This evaluation study was independently 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.

THE METHODOLOGY

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.

LEAF Marque goes beyond being purely a certification system...

Growing LEAF's Voice

Every aspect of LEAF's work is supported by LEAF Marque, offering:

- **Credibility**
- **Income**
- **Technical tools**

for farmers, supply chain actors & regulators, advocacy & public engagement

Growing Impact

Significantly contributes to farmers **improving** their farming practices, whether certified or not

Growing Awareness

Raises societal awareness and urgency of **environmental issues**

Growing Rewards

Delivers financially beyond market opportunities, for personal pride and for protecting the land:

- Increased **gross margins**
- Improved farm **biodiversity**, **beauty** and **public image**
- A **community** of growers supporting and learning from each other
- Commercially sensible, grows the **long-term health** and **future productivity** of farm
- Provides a **story to tell**, showcases **best practice** and demonstrates going 'the extra mile'
- Gives **credibility** and **defensibility** to good farming
- Strengthens farmer's position and respect with retailers
- Enables **earned recognition** for environmental inspections



Growing Recognition

Helps with **risk management**, demonstrates **due diligence** and strengthens position around government support schemes ie. E.L.M

Growing Retailer Reputation

LEAF Marque **quantifies** and **independently verifies** continuous sustainability improvements and supports risk and reputation management

Growing The LEAF Community

Engaged farmers, brands & retailers respect the hard work & **commitment** to sustainable agriculture of the LEAF Team

Growing Value

Farmers who have a strong motivation to work with nature consider LEAF Marque to be of **great value**, especially for those with short supply chains. **Brands value LEAF's passion, expertise** and **consistency**.

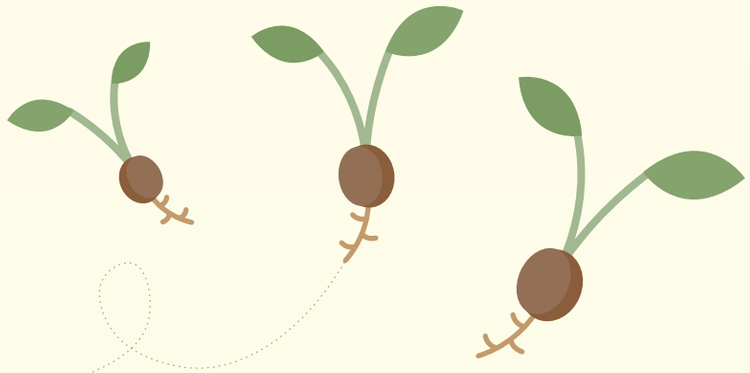
Growing Credibility

LEAF Marque offer a robust, holistic core to farmers' improvements, with third party assurance giving **credibility**, excellent **field standards** and appropriate **wildlife standards**.

LEAF
LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND FARMING

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Our Learnings...



Grow recognition of the LEAF Marque logo & what it means

Grow carbon reduction offer

Grow market opportunities

Grow benchmarking with other standards

Grow the LEAF Sustainable Farming Review offer

Grow harmonised metrics

Grow reach – sector, region, country



LEAF'S RESPONSE

"LEAF welcomes the outcomes of this evaluation, which confirm our belief that LEAF Marque certification goes beyond just creating market opportunities, but also underpins LEAF's overall strategic objectives of delivering and promoting more sustainable farming and food through 'beyond certification' activities. The findings indicate that every aspect of LEAF's work is supported, in one or more ways, by the existence of LEAF Marque, and the credibility, tools and income that it provides.

Many participants recognised that LEAF Marque certification allows businesses to credibly demonstrate their commitment to more sustainable farming and, crucially, to obtain the benefits associated with that certification. These include market access and retention, price premiums, earned recognition for environmental inspections and personal pride.

It is very encouraging to note that LEAF Marque certification is well regarded by farmers, retailers and brands. We are delighted that so many participants value what LEAF Marque represents in terms of independence, transparency and consistency as well as recognising its value with regard to the increased inspections that the E.L.M scheme is likely to bring. We are particularly pleased to note that, in spite of the challenging external conditions presented by the Coronavirus pandemic, LEAF Marque is able to quantify and independently verify continuous improvement and that it plays an important part of their risk and reputation management. This is particularly important for farmers in helping to secure market opportunities and in demonstrating sustainability credentials, resilience, and adaptability. For retailers, LEAF Marque is considered to help with risk management and due diligence.

The evaluation presents a clear reference point to monitor improvements. There were a number of learnings highlighted in the study – namely growing recognition of the logo and what it means, finding ways to streamline auditing burdens on farmers, building our carbon offer, facilitating wider market opportunities, building on the LEAF Sustainable Farming Review and offering harmonised metrics. We are addressing each of these areas by building on our management tools and resources, ongoing public consultation of the LEAF Marque Standard, discussions with policy makers and identification of strategic partnerships with retailers and brands. We are fully committed to continual improvement in all that we do and remain open and transparent about the progress we are delivering."

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LEAF is a registered charity, no: 1045781

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