



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **16 years on over 900 farming businesses engaged with the LEAF Marque assurance system**

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) has released its seventh Global Impacts Report – *'Delivering More Sustainable Food and Farming'* revealing continued growth in the UK with 39% of fruit and vegetables now grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses - up from 25% just four years ago. Worldwide, a total of 973 farming businesses, representing 375,679 hectares of crop in 27 countries are now engaged in the LEAF Marque environmental assurance system.

The report, which was launched at the LEAF Marque Summit on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019, highlights the impressive progress delivered by LEAF Marque certified business across the globe in delivering more sustainable farming. It also outlines LEAF's plans for the future, including targets to strengthen its offer in the livestock sector, broaden its global reach and continue to invest in enhancing management tools, training and services for LEAF Marque growers.

### **Commenting on the report Tom Green, LEAF Marque Chairman said:**

"LEAF Marque is now in its sixteenth year and has grown to become one of the world's leading environmental assurance systems, providing a robust, independent, third party mechanism to recognise and reward sustainable farming practice in the market place. Our work is vital in addressing global challenges on climate change and as we face possible exit from the European Union, with much attention focussed on the nature of trading relationships outside the EU, and the UK Government policy prioritising the environment and the delivery of 'public goods', there is no doubt that LEAF Marque certified businesses will be well positioned."

### **Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive added:**

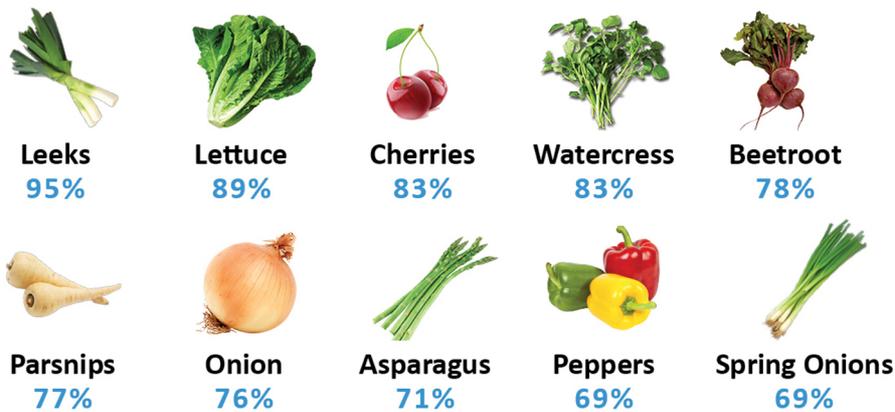
"This high level of engagement with the LEAF Marque assurance system is driving real and lasting change in the resilience, productivity and health of farmland across the globe. The level of growth would not have been possible without the commitment and leadership of our LEAF Marque growers. Together with them and our many valued partners across the food supply chain, we are determined to remain a leading catalyst for improved farm management, contributing to the sustainability of our

farmed land and supporting food security and livelihoods in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as well as national objectives set out in the Government’s 25 Year Environment Strategy.”

### LEAF Marque in the UK

The report shows that in the UK, LEAF Marque’s prominence in the fresh produce sector has grown for the seventh year, with many UK fresh produce now almost exclusively grown by LEAF Marque certified businesses. For example, leeks 95%, lettuce 89%, cherries, watercress 83% and beetroot 78%.

### Percentage of UK fruit and vegetable cropped area grown on LEAF Marque certified businesses



### LEAF Marque Global

973 farming businesses worldwide are LEAF Marque certified, covering a total global hectareage of 375,679 hectares, representing 160 different crop types and livestock classes. The arable and horticulture sectors are the two largest LEAF Marque crop areas worldwide at 185,084 hectares and 167,979 hectares respectively. The UK has the largest hectareage of LEAF Marque certified crop area at 305,465 hectares, followed by Spain 27,025 hectares and France 13,855 hectares.

### More Sustainable Farming through Integrated Farm Management

The report highlights how LEAF Marque certified businesses are delivering improvements across all nine areas of Integrated Farm Management, which underpins the LEAF Marque Standard. Soil health is a key area with four in ten farms (41%) recording soil organic matter to build resilience and productivity. Other precious resources including water and energy are also being carefully managed:



67% LEAF Marque certified businesses manage reservoirs for water quality, safety and/or wildlife, 48% have one or more types of renewable energy generation, 52% carry out waste management best practice and 70% optimise the health and welfare of their livestock to maximise performance.

LEAF Marque certified businesses are also working towards important social sustainability targets to build community support and engagement. 71,816 visitors were recorded in 2018, including school children, farmers, industry representatives and agricultural college and university students.

**Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive concluded:**

“There is no magic bullet to optimising sustainable food production. It requires collective efforts of farmers, governments, retailers, NGO’s, the research community and individuals. We must all work together to achieve shared outcomes – more productive soils, cleaner water and air, greater biodiversity, efficient energy use and improved connections with people, farming and the natural world. LEAF Marque certification is part of the solution as a powerful tool to deliver improvements and create change for the better.”

LEAF’s seventh Global Impacts Report was launched at the annual LEAF Marque Summit, which explored the theme *‘Beyond Certification: Transforming business resilience through sustainability - the impacts, benefits and opportunities.’* To see the full report and supporting summary overview, visit [www.leafuk.org/about-leaf/our-impacts](http://www.leafuk.org/about-leaf/our-impacts)

**ENDS**

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**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 environmental 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.

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[www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org) LEAF is a registered charity (No. 1045781) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England (No. 3035047).