



## MEDIA RELEASE

15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### New LEAF Marque Ambition Launched

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) unveiled its new ambition for LEAF Marque today (15<sup>th</sup> May) at a special reception to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the leading environmental assurance system.

The three central pillars to LEAF's future ambitions for LEAF Marque were revealed as being:

- **Growing Impact** for LEAF Marque certified farmers through opening up market opportunities, assisting with strategic business planning, enhancing on-farm biodiversity and delivering an improved environment
- Enabling brands and retailers to **demonstrate commitment** to environmentally sustainable procurement, continued improvement of supply base and sustainable farming becoming the benchmark for global farming
- **Raising awareness** among consumers, assuring them that food has been environmentally and sustainably produced and empowering consumers to make positive changes through their purchasing decisions.

Going forward, LEAF is committed to delivering more environmentally sustainable farming, working with forward-thinking producers who are committed to sustainable land management and providing a robust, transparent and credible assurance system. Through the independently verified LEAF Marque, LEAF will support farmers with technical guidance and will help companies strengthen their responsible sourcing policies. And in parallel, LEAF will continue to raise public awareness and increase demand for more sustainably produced products.

In total, there are currently 1,032 LEAF Marque certified businesses, operating across the globe. Significantly, retailers are increasingly using LEAF Marque to demonstrate sustainable farming practices, such as through the long-term commitment from Waitrose sourcing all UK fresh fruit and vegetables from LEAF Marque certified growers and LEAF Marque being a Plan A attribute for Marks and Spencer. Furthermore, LEAF Marque growers are being recognised for their commitment beyond the market place, with the States of Jersey Government's new Rural Economy Strategy including LEAF Marque certification and Environment Agency Earned Recognition.



Tom Green, in his first public engagement as Chairman for LEAF Marque, said: “Over the past 15 years, LEAF has developed LEAF Marque into the leading global environmental assurance system recognising more sustainably farmed products. Today, 36% of the fruit and vegetables produced in the UK are produced to LEAF Marque Standards and its global reach is growing all the time too, with production now in 34 countries across the world – that’s quite an achievement in 15 years.

“Consumer awareness and demand for more sustainably produced food is at an all-time high – demonstrating the need for an assurance system such as LEAF Marque. It provides businesses with an opportunity to promote their commitment to environmental sustainability.

“Our ambition is to turn up the volume on the great work that has already been done and to shine a light on what LEAF Marque means for all the key parts of the food supply chain – from farmers, through brands and retailers and UK consumers. Here’s to the next 15 years.”

George Eustice MP, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), said: “LEAF does important work to connect more people to the countryside, through initiatives to get more people out onto farms, and appreciating the work our farmers do.

“It was a pleasure to speak at the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary reception today, and to hear LEAF Marque’s ambitions for the future as consumer demand for sustainable, high-welfare food continues to grow.”

The reception was held in the House of Commons on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May. As well as celebrating 15 years of LEAF Marque and revealing future ambitions for LEAF Marque, LEAF announced the launch of LEAF Education, the rebranding of FACE (Farming and Countryside Education), which merged with LEAF last year.

Also speaking at the event was Marion Regan of Hugh Lowe Farms, the very first grower to become a LEAF Marque certified business 15 years ago. Marion’s farm produces strawberries for major retailers and is the long term supplier of strawberries to The Championships at Wimbledon.

**ENDS**

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#### Editors' Notes:

- **Tom Green:** Following a career in large scale vertically integrated production agriculture as CEO of Spearhead International, Tom is now a non-executive director at the company. He is Chairman of Hummingbird Technologies and PBD Biotech, and Director of Global Strategy for Austria-based Pessl Instruments.
- **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)** is the 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 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.
- **The LEAF Marque** is a leading 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 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** 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. Next year's LEAF Open Farm Sunday will take place on 10th June 2018. Alongside LEAF Open Farm Sunday, farms across Britain also host **LEAF Open Farm School Days** which run throughout June. They provide thousands of school children with the opportunity to visit a farm to learn more about where their food comes from and how it is produced.