



Media Statement – 8 January 2020 - DRAFT

Farmers Urged to Speak Up for UK Farming

LEAF Chief Executive calls for farming industry to step up and demonstrate its role in combatting climate change

To coincide with this year's Oxford Farming Conference, **LEAF Chief Executive, Caroline Drummond MBE**, urges farmers to demonstrate the value they bring to the environment, people and the planet.

"The rise of extreme global weather events, seen recently with wildfires in Australia, have really shone a spotlight on the urgency of our climate crisis. The UK is certainly not exempt from the direct and devastating impact of these events on our farming, our land, our environment and food supplies, as we saw last year with extensive areas of the UK subject to severe flooding.

"The farming industry has always been a 'can do' sector, practical, adaptable and resilient. Now is the time for all of us in the rural sector to step up to demonstrating the range of public goods and services it delivers. There is no doubt that we face challenging times, both climatically and politically. Yet we are also at the start of an exciting new era. One where globally, farmers have the opportunity to be an active part of the solution in mitigating and managing climate change and on-going human and planetary health issues.

"Farmers are absolutely critical to achieving net carbon zero, delivering public goods and ensuring a secure food supply alongside high animal welfare and enhanced biodiversity and nature improvements. Now is the time for us to step up and drive forward real change.

"The UK farming sector is a global leader in the production of safe, nutritious food with some of the highest animal welfare and environmental standards in the world. Our industry is pushing forward the innovations and technology to tackle issues around carbon sequestration, supporting and enhancing biodiversity and improving public access.

"Indeed, LEAF's Integrated Farm Management systems approach provides a framework for farmers to manage, adapt, develop and drive performance and improvement towards more sustainable

farming. In essence, it supports farmers in managing more effectively those areas they can control. Over the coming year, LEAF will be setting out its commitment to supporting farmers in practical ways as we develop our new strategy which we will launch ahead of our 30th anniversary in 2021.

“As we look to build more robust, regenerative farming approaches, based on sound science and practical application, there are great opportunities for farmers to be part of the solution.”

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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** works to inspire future generations about farming, food and the countryside. It manages a number of industry and educational initiatives, including FarmerTime , 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. LEAF Open Farm Sunday takes place this year on the 7th June.

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