

4<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) response to Secretary of State Michael Gove's Speech at Oxford Farming Conference 2018**

Following Michael Gove's announcement at this morning's Oxford Farming Conference that farmers will receive payments for environmental improvements post Brexit, Caroline Drummond, CEO at LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) said:

"We are pleased that farmers will be recognised and rewarded for sustainable water and soil management practices as well as wider biodiversity commitments including planting wildflower meadows and woodland. Similarly, we are also hugely encouraged by the government's clear commitment to improving public engagement in food and farming, through initiatives such as LEAF Open Farm Sunday.

As the Secretary of State mentioned in his speech this morning, farmers can already secure recognition for their environmental commitment through LEAF Marque certification. In fact, an independent survey\* carried out last year showed that nearly all (97%) LEAF Marque certified businesses secured access to new market opportunities, with nearly a quarter (23%) reporting receiving a price premium for their LEAF Marque certified product.

"The LEAF Marque assurance system, underpinned by the principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) supports farmers in developing the financial stability of their businesses, while protecting and enhancing the immediate and wider environment. LEAF Marque certified businesses undergo an annual, independent inspection and the scheme is based on nine core IFM principles: soil management and fertility, crop health and protection, pollution control and by-product management, animal husbandry, energy efficiency, water management, landscape and nature conservation, community engagement and organisation and planning.

"For over 25 years, LEAF has been leading the way in delivering more sustainable food and farming. Our pioneering LEAF Network of Demonstration Farms and Innovation Centres together with our farm business management tools ensures that knowledge around sustainable farming is developed and disseminated; we reach out to the general public to raise awareness of farming and food production through inspiring public engagement activities, including LEAF Open Farm Sunday. Furthermore, our recent merger with FACE (Farming And Countryside Education) is further strengthening our work in bringing agriculture into schools. We also help farmers develop the economic, environmental and social success of their businesses through LEAF Marque certification.

"We welcome the continued opportunity to work with government in developing solutions and policies that will grow our farming and food industry domestically and on a global scale."

**ENDS**

\* The study was carried out by The Countryside and Community Research Institute and was launched in June 2017. The full research report '*The effect and impact of LEAF Marque in the delivery of more sustainable farming: a study to understand the added value to farmers*' can be downloaded at [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)

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**Editors' Notes:**

- **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 an 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.