

**MEDIA RELEASE – 29 March 2022**

**WORLD’S LARGEST GROWER AND PACKER OF DAFFODILS RECOGNISED FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING EXCELLENCE**

* **Varfell Farms becomes the latest farm to join LEAF’S (Linking Environment And Farming’s) network of Demonstration Farms, set up to showcase more sustainable, regenerative farming methods.**
* **Varfell Farms produces 65% of the world’s daffodil flowers and holds around 60% of the daffodil bulbs in the world across 200 varieties.**
* **It joins 40 other LEAF Demonstration Farms across a range of farming sectors including livestock, arable and horticulture.**
* **Varfell Farms has been LEAF Marque certified since 2012.**
* **The farm has been involved in the Farming Futures programme, led by the Penwith Landscape Partnership in collaboration with LEAF.**

Varfell Farms, the world’s leading grower and packer of daffodil flowers and bulbs was formally launched yesterday as a LEAF Demonstration Farm, in recognition of its cutting-edge sustainable farming practices. Based at Long Rock, Penzance along the spectacular Cornish coast, Varfell is also one of the UK’s largest agri-business firms, supplying blooms and bulbs to multiple retailers including M&S, Waitrose, Tesco, Sainsburys, B&Q and exporting into Europe. As well as daffodils, the business also grows over 1 million stems of agapanthus and peonies. The farm has been LEAF Marque certified since 2012.

Today’s launch comes as we reach the end of the Penwith Landscape Partnership’s Farming Futures project, working with farmers to support farm businesses which are sensitive to Penwith's landscape, heritage and biodiversity. The project has supported a number of growers in the region to become LEAF Marque certified and has worked to promote farming practices that are sustainable and conducive to protecting and enhancing the soil; and conserving and protecting the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Penwith region.

With its focus on more regenerative agricultural practices, underpinned by the belief that “what is better for nature is better for profitability”, Varfell is an exemplar for more nature-based techniques, delivered through the principles of Integrated Farm Management (IFM). Following significant investment over the last decade, it has improved soil and plant health, reduced erosion and runoff as well as minimising input costs. A diverse rotation including cover cropping elements carefully designed to enhance soil health; controlled traffic farming to minimise soil compaction; reduced tillage to promote beneficial microbes and, are all part of the farm’s regenerative approach.

The farm is also at the forefront of driving innovation and uses the latest automation technology such as optical grades, GPS, drones, satellite imagery, radar and lidar to drive efficiencies across the business.

Welcoming Varfell Farms as a LEAF Demonstration Farm, LEAF’s Technical Director, Vicky Robinson said:

“We are delighted to welcome Varfell Farms as LEAF’s first cut flower Demonstration Farm as we embark on an exciting new era and look to strengthen the breadth of sectors in the LEAF Network. It is absolutely critical that we link up with leading businesses to promote best practice and thinking into more sustainable, regenerative growing techniques across a wide range of farming sectors.”

“Varfell Farms is leading the way in what can be achieved as we accelerate sustainable, regenerative farming in the cut flower industry. The work being carried out here, the commitment of everyone involved throughout the business will bring a wealth of expertise and crucial information on the role and development of Integrated Farm Management in this sector.”

As a LEAF Demonstration Farm, Varfell will act as an important local and national hub for demonstration, learning and knowledge exchange. As well as hosting visits for other growers, it will offer a ‘living classroom’ for a broad range of community groups to see more integrated, climate positive practices in action.

Simon Gardner, Farms Director at Varfell Farms, added:

“We are hugely excited about the opportunities this partnership will offer to drive forward greater uptake of more climate positive approaches in our sector. Being a LEAF Demonstration Farm will help improve understanding of what more regenerative farming looks like in action and how all elements of a growing system work together in a holistic way to optimise not just environmental, but also social and economic sustainability.”

**-ENDS-**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**About LEAF**

* **LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming**) is the leading organisation delivering and promoting Climate Positive, thriving, resilient and exemplar agro-ecological farming at an increasingly global level. Working with farmers, the food industry, scientists, environmentalists, teachers, young people, and consumers, we are looking at new ways to deliver productivity and prosperity among our farmers, enrich the environment and engage young people and society in a valuable and meaningful way.
* **The LEAF Marque** is a global 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** 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.
* **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 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 Innovation Centres** are research organisations whose work supports the research, evidence, development, and promotion of Integrated Farm Management. They investigate and communicate practices which underpin the continual improvement of the Integrated Farm Management approach to help deliver more sustainable food and farming.