



LEAF Policy Statement for concentrated production areas

As the demand for high quality food production has increased, areas of intensive production have developed globally where there are favourable conditions. This is manifested by large scale use of protected cropping such as plastic greenhouses and associated issues like high water demand.

LEAF recognises the dynamic of both the positive and potentially negative consequences of these production areas but cannot allow them to be immune from current environmental impact concerns. LEAF will embrace the issues surrounding them by establishing and engaging with local stakeholders with an environmental interest. They will hold regular meetings, discussion groups and a forum to disseminate information to drive change.

A consultative group will emerge from this initial stage and through their engagement and negotiation, a 'road map' with specific action plans will be agreed for implementation by local growers to reflect LEAF IFM practices. Often small changes can make a big difference in these areas and help ensure both environmental and commercial sustainability for the region and its producers.

Notes and examples

These areas of concentrated horticultural production, such as Southern Spain, are challenging for the Global development of LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM) system. LEAF aims to provide farmers and growers with the tools to adopt and demonstrate more sustainable farming systems wherever they are located in the world. This has already been successfully demonstrated in a number of areas, but notably in South Africa, where there has been wholehearted commitment to LEAF's principles. Specific challenges have been overcome which have reaped positive benefits to the environment and farming.

Almeria province in southern Spain is one of the most important production locations for fruit and vegetable supply in Europe, where there are some 30,000 hectares of plastic greenhouses which have been developed over the last 30 years due to its favourable climate.

The LEAF Marque Global Standard v.8.0 does already seek to address these issues through Section 6.4, which states;

"Have you notified the relevant authorities, where appropriate, and completed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), where you are planning to bring or have brought "uncultivated land or semi-natural areas" into more intensive agricultural use by clearance of vegetation, cultivation, fertilisation, liming, drainage, introducing high stocking rates, or earth moving etc?"

However, often the existence of the 'relevant authorities' has been hard to discern and also the legislative requirements can be unclear in some countries and it is for all these reasons above that LEAF has recognised the need to facilitate local engagement and debate to develop and implement robust IFM practice and mitigate potentially damaging environmental impact.

For example, LEAF has already made contact with several local Spanish stakeholders including the University of Almeria, LEAF producers, Bird Life International, World Wildlife Fund and the Certification companies to start this process of engagement in Almeria.

End