

FARMER LEAF Backgrounder

History

- LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) was set up in 1991, by David Richardson (Norfolk farmer and leading journalist) and other farming industry experts. The aim was to encourage other farmers in the UK to produce food with environmental care and to improve public understanding of food and farming
- The idea was inspired by Germany's farmers who were changing the way they farmed the land to make it more environmentally friendly
- Nowadays, LEAF promotes environmentally responsible farming. They support farmers to produce good food, with care and to high environmental standards, identified in-store by the LEAF Marque logo. They also build public understanding and trust of food and farming in a number of ways, including Open Farm Sunday and visits to a national network of Demonstration Farms

LEAF's main activities

- *The LEAF Marque:* is a food label consumers and the food industry trust. The assurance scheme, developed by LEAF, is based on environmentally responsible Integrated Farm Management (IFM) principles which help farmers produce good food, with environmental care. The LEAF logo appears in many retailers as well as farm shops and other independent outlets giving customers reassurance that they are enjoying food they can trust from farmers who care – not only about food but the countryside and the wildlife it sustains.
- *Integrated Farm Management (IFM):* LEAF's IFM ensures the highest standards of food production with the minimum environmental impact and encourages a better public understanding of farming and the countryside. What makes LEAF's IFM different is its ability to balance quality production with the environment and social responsibility across the whole farm and considers each farm's specific requirements on an individual basis
- *The LEAF Audit:* offers a complete business and environmental health check for your farm. It is a progressive and practical whole farm business management tool, to help farmers prioritise decisions and make changes to farm practices as well as demonstrate their environmental responsibility. The LEAF Audit was developed by farmers, for farmers and is well regarded throughout the industry
- *Open Farm Sunday:* is a national, annual event which sees hundreds of farmers open their gates to the general public. It is a great opportunity for visitors to see at first hand how farmers produce the food they eat and care for the countryside. For more information visit www.farmsunday.org

- *Demonstration Farms:* LEAF's national network of Demonstration Farms are all volunteers, carrying out IFM. They host visits for a wide range of groups – from farmers to politicians, teachers to WI groups, so they can see for themselves how IFM can produce affordable food in harmony with the environment. LEAF also holds technical field days and training for farmers to help them adopt more sustainable farming practices
- *The LEAF Green Box:* is a simple, step-by-step approach to monitoring the environment on a farm. Divided into four sections: biodiversity; soil; water and air, the Green Box helps farmers record and monitor activity on their farm
- *Let Nature Feed Your Senses:* LEAF and the Sensory Trust are working together on a flagship project to connect disengaged groups and individuals with nature and the countryside, through food and farming. The project involves sensory rich visits to farms and nature reserves across England and is part of Natural England's Access to Nature programme, which is funded by The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme
- *Virtual Farm Walk:* like a real farm – the Virtual Farm Walk is a great place for learning for all key stages of the national curriculum. From maths to geography, art to English, science to IT, it gives children the chance to understand what happens in the countryside to produce food and care for wildlife. For more information visit www.virtualfarmwalk.org

Key staff

- *Caroline Drummond*, Chief Executive of LEAF, was awarded an MBE for Services to Agriculture in 2009 and has been leading LEAF since it was established in 1991
- *Jeremy Boxall*, Commercial Manager of LEAF, has been working for LEAF for over 10 years. Jeremy manages the LEAF Marque scheme, a respected global environmental standard offering consumers a wide range of products that have been produced in accordance with LEAF's Integrated Farm Management principles

What others have to say about LEAF

"LEAF is the backbone of our farming - it is a way of helping people understand how we farm and look after all aspects of the farm, banks, woods and field. It is the best way for us to communicate how we farm. LEAF enables me to talk to people who come to our farm in a way that makes them understand about farming. Not many other schemes take us to the standard we want to be at. The LEAF Audit enables us to develop and plan our environmental path."

Anthony Carroll, Tiptoe Farm - Heritage Potatoes

"LEAF gives us the support and backing which is crucial to help us inform the public and promote sustainable farming."

David Felce, Midloe Farm

For further information or to join LEAF visit www.leafuk.org.

- Ends -

For further information and images, to arrange an interview or to obtain industry comment:

Ailsa Jensen

LEAF Press Office

T: 01189 475 956

E: ailsa.jensen@ceres-pr.co.uk

Editor's Notes:

- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) promotes environmentally responsible farming. We support farmers to produce good food, with care and to high environmental standards, identified in-store by the LEAF Marque logo. We build public understanding and trust of food and farming in a number of ways, including Open Farm Sunday and visits to our national network of Demonstration Farms
- For more information on all LEAF's work and activities, visit www.leafuk.org