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MEDIA RELEASE

LEAF announces its strategic direction for 2016 – 2021

LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), has today (15th June 2016) announced its strategic direction for the next five years. The announcement, made at Cereals 2016, reveals LEAF's plans to build on its accomplishments and strengthen its core objectives to position itself as the go-to organisation for the delivery of more sustainable food and farming.

As LEAF celebrates its 25th anniversary and the news that consumer recognition of the LEAF Marque has risen significantly from 9% in 2014 to 15% in 2016, the announcement indicates exciting expansion plans for the organisation and a significant increase in its capability and capacity.

LEAF's five enabling objectives are:

- **Tripling** LEAF's capability over the next five years to deliver its work and outreach
- **Increasing** the adoption of more sustainable farming practices through Integrated Farm Management
- **Improving** industry recognition and demand for sustainably sourced products
- **Leading** a collaborative approach within the industry for better public engagement among consumers
- **Positively** influencing consumer attitudes towards knowledge of food, farming and the environment

The strategy will focus on more effectively delivering LEAF's overall mission **'To inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities.'**

LEAF is aiming to reinforce its commitment to all stakeholders including positioning LEAF Marque as the most sought after mark of sustainability among the world's farmers. It will also strengthen its membership offering in the fresh produce, arable and livestock sectors and build its consumer engagement activities. This will be achieved through demonstration activities, management tools, and strengthening work with LEAF's Network of Demonstration Farms and Innovation Centres to increase the evidence of the impact of Integrated Farm Management to the delivery of more sustainable farming.

LEAF will also look to identify partnerships within the food, farming, environment, health and education sectors to build on the added value opportunities for farmers around the health agenda – in line with LEAF's theme: **'Healthy food and farming – fit for the future.'** Moving forward, LEAF will be playing a critical role in facilitating farming's engagement in providing some of the solutions to current health challenges facing an increasingly urban society.

Caroline Drummond, Chief Executive at LEAF said: “LEAF is at an exciting and important juncture. Reflecting on our progress over the last 25 years, we have clearly defined the principles of sustainable farming, built a range of management tools and services to help farmers deliver it and gain market recognition through LEAF Marque. We are also hugely proud of the success of our public engagement activities such as Open Farm Sunday. We are now in an excellent position to build on this work. Our priorities over the next five years will be to build LEAF Marque and its public recognition, strengthen our knowledge exchange activities, grow our membership offer and lead innovative ways to increase public trust and understanding of agriculture.”

Open Farm Sunday, which took place this year on 5th June, saw over 250,000 members of the public visit a hosting farm. To continue this and to build on public respect for farming, the organisation will look to increase understanding of the work farmers do and the impact farming has on consumers’ everyday lives by building on core activities including Open Farm Sunday, LEAF Marque, Speak Out and Virtual Farm Walk. Through this, LEAF will look to increase public recognition and demand for sustainably sourced produce.

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LEAF 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 Innovation Centres** are research organisations whose work supports the research, development and promotion of IFM. They investigate and communicate practices which underpin the continual improvement of IFM to help deliver more sustainable food and farming.

- **The LEAF Information Centre** is an online information portal for LEAF members housing all of LEAF's technical publications and a range of guides, assessments and videos on all aspects of IFM as well as some of the broader topics associated with sustainable agriculture.
- Open Farm Sunday is managed by **LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming)**. LEAF is the leading organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. It 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 has organised Open Farm Sunday since it began in 2006. (LEAF is a registered [charity no: 1045781](#)).