



LEAF Leads The Way

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A new study out this week shows that an assurance scheme developed by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), an agricultural charity, is leading the way in the environmental labelling of food. The research evaluated a number of schemes and compared how they help to protect the environment. It found that whilst LEAF Marque, run by LEAF, scored the highest marks across a range of criteria, other better known schemes actually scored significantly less in some important areas.

Assurance schemes have been developed in response to the significant challenges facing government, farmers and retailers to feed a growing world population and to help protect precious resources like water. But the research, which was commissioned by Defra and carried out by the University of Hertfordshire's Agricultural and Environmental Research Unit, reveals that confusingly for consumers they are not all based on the same criteria. The report's authors, lead by Dr Kathy Lewis is therefore calling for a more consistent approach and highlights the need for environmental labelling to be based on a robust, scientific approach.

Caroline Drummond, LEAF's Chief Executive agrees: "We believe that consumers should be 100% sure about the credentials of the food they buy and they have the right to demand that it is grown to the highest environmental standards. The LEAF Marque offers just that. It's a scheme that can be implemented on any farm, anywhere in the world and therefore offers a real solution to the huge challenges facing us if we are to produce sufficient affordable food for everyone. So if you care about your food and how it is produced, seek out the LEAF Marque when you go shopping."

The University of Hertfordshire's report coincides with the release of new independent research commissioned by LEAF from CCRI (Countryside and Community Research Unit) which examines the value to farmers of belonging to LEAF. This research clearly shows that LEAF offers farmers a host of benefits, both financial and practical, strengthening its case as a real and viable solution for the future of food and farming.

Ends

For more information about LEAF membership and LEAF Marque please contact: LEAF on:
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For further information on all LEAF's work and activities, visit www.leafuk.org

Editors' Notes:

- LEAF Marque is an assurance scheme based on LEAF farming principles. It is independently inspected and certified by third party certification bodies. Farms certified as LEAF Marque can use the LEAF Marque logo on all the produce they sell, direct to the consumer or to retail outlets
- LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM) approach combines the best of traditional farming methods with modern technology, allowing farmers to manage their farms in an informed, professional and caring way. IFM encourages farmers to maintain the highest standards of food production with the minimum environmental impact
- Open Farm Sunday (taking place on 12 June 2011) is a national flagship event when hundreds of farms 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
- There are 49 LEAF Demonstration Farms across England and Scotland. A variety of different groups visit LEAF Demonstration Farms including farmers, MPs, MEPs, government groups, farming, wildlife and conservation groups (including Young Farmers, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB groups) WI groups, schools, teachers and other educational bodies
- Let Nature Feed Your Senses – LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) 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
- ¹ Food vision for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, December 2009