



**Media release: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

## **Farmers Get a Helping Hand to Improve Their Soil**

**LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) in partnership with Asda today launched a new guide to help farmers improve the long term sustainability of their soil.**

'Simply Sustainable Soils' is a practical, hands-on guide offering farmers six simple steps to improve the performance, health and long term sustainability of their land. Looking at soil texture, structure, drainage and compaction through to nutrients and biological health, the guide helps farmers to get the best out of their soil and monitor changes in soil health.

Stephen Fell, LEAF Chairman and Yorkshire sheep farmer said:

"As a farmer, soil is my greatest asset. It is essential that I manage it wisely to ensure the health of my crop and grassland. I am delighted that LEAF, in partnership with Asda, has produced this new guide to soil management. I am sure it will inspire farmers to make the most of this precious resource. Furthermore, as we come to feel the pinch of climate change and the pressures of food security, this guide will help farmers reflect on the critical role they play in ensuring the long term sustainability of our farming systems."

Chris Brown, Asda Head of Sustainable Sourcing added:

"Recent climate change projections indicate that the UK is likely to experience warmer, hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters. Added to this, sea levels look set to rise with more frequent and intense extreme weather events. These climatic conditions all present a higher risk to the stability of our soil.

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“How farmers manage their soil is critical to help reduce the effects of these changes. Which is why they need practical and realistic ways to make their farming systems more robust. 'Simply Sustainable Soils' will help make these changes a reality, bringing about meaningful changes on the ground.

"At Asda, sustainability is at the heart of everything we do. We're working hard to reduce our environmental impact across the entire business, and are committed to engaging with everyone in our supply chain from our customers through to our farmers. That's why we're delighted to have produced this guide together with LEAF."

**Notes to editors:**

- 'Simply Sustainable Soils' will be sent to all ASDA farmer partners. It is also available to LEAF members and downloadable from LEAF's website [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)
- Our grateful thanks to Professor Brian Chambers, ADAS, Professor Keith Goulding (Rothamsted Research) and Dr Alastair Leake (Chairman, SMI [in full]) for providing invaluable advice in the preparation of this booklet.
- LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) is a farming charity at the forefront of sustainable agriculture. We promote environmentally responsible farming and help farmers to produce good food, with care and to high environmental standards, identified in-store by the LEAF Marque logo.
- LEAF also builds public understanding and trust of food and farming in a number of ways, including Open Farm Sunday (held this year on the 12<sup>th</sup> June) and visits to our national network of Demonstration Farms.
- For more information please contact the LEAF office tel: 024 7641 3911 email: [enquiries@leafuk.org](mailto:enquiries@leafuk.org) or visit: [www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)

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