Madison, WI, November 10, 2009 – Leonardo Academy announces a call for applications for five vacant seats on the National Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee, in the following stakeholder categories: Producer (1), User (2), Environmentalist (1) and General Interest (1). Individuals or representatives of entities across the entire agricultural supply chain—including growers, farm organizations, handlers and distributors, food processors, food service companies, retailers, government agencies, environmental organizations, labor groups, consumer groups, NGOs, academia and other interested parties—that are interested in engaging in a national dialogue on sustainable agriculture are encouraged to apply.

About the Sustainable Agriculture Standard (SCS-001) and the Standards Committee
The 58-member Standards Committee is in the process of developing a national standard for sustainable agriculture (SCS-001) under the rules of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The Committee consists of a skilled, diverse membership representing a broad range of perspectives from across all areas of agriculture, including commodity producers, specialty crop producers, agricultural product processors, food distributors, food retailers, environmental organizations, labor organizations and industry trade associations, as well as government representatives, academics, regulators and certifiers.

Leonardo Academy, a nonprofit organization that works to advance sustainability, is providing facilitation and process support for the SCS-001 standard development initiative. “Key milestones achieved by the Standards Committee since its formation in July 2008 include two successful face-to-face meetings in which the mission and initial scope of the standard were determined, election of the Committee’s leadership and the establishment of six Task Forces that worked from December 2008 to May 2009 to develop a suite of recommendations for the Committee to consider with regard to how the standard should move forward,” Michael Arny, President of Leonardo Academy, said.

In addition, the Committee created six Subcommittees that have been working since July 2009 to develop the outline of the standard along with draft economic, environmental and social criteria for the Committee to review at its next in-person meeting. The Subcommittees are also continuing efforts to engage additional stakeholders in the standard development process. “We are very pleased at the level of participation and the depth of discussions that are occurring within the Subcommittees, which include Committee members, other process stakeholders and observers,” Arny stated.

How to Apply for Standards Committee Membership
Call for Applications: Five Open Seats on the National Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee

To receive an application for membership on the SCS-001 Standards Committee, contact Amanda Raster at Leonardo Academy: amanda@leonardoacademy.org or (608) 280-0255, or visit ardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard/development.html.

Applications must be submitted by 12:00 pm CST on Monday, December 28, 2009. The new Committee members will be announced on Monday, January 18, 2010. Individuals who previously submitted applications for Committee membership will automatically be placed in the pool of applicants for the current openings.

Beyond the Standards Committee – How to Get Involved
In addition to applying for Standards Committee membership, stakeholders are also invited to participate in the SCS-001 standard development process as a subcommittee member, observer or reviewer of the draft standard once it is opened up for public comment.

Subcommittees – Subcommittees are open to membership by all interested parties. The six current Subcommittees — 1) Economic Sustainability, 2) Environmental Sustainability, 3) Social Sustainability, 4) Structure and Process, 5) Reference Library and Information and 6) Fundraising and Communications — are taking a direct role in developing draft criteria, supporting Leonardo Academy’s outreach and fundraising efforts related to the Sustainable Agriculture Standard and providing additional recommendations and guidance to the Standards Committee.

Observers – Observers are also invited to participate in the SCS-001 standard development process. Observers may attend in-person Standards Committee meetings on a first-come, first-serve basis, subject to the availability of space, and may also participate in all Standards Committee and Subcommittee teleconferences.

Public Review and Comment – Once the Standards Committee reaches agreement on a draft Sustainable Agriculture Standard, it will be posted for public comment. The public review and comment period provides all stakeholders with an additional opportunity to participate in the standard development process. At the end of the public comment period, the Standards Committee will address all of the comments received prior to submitting the final standard to ANSI for approval as an American National Standard.
To sign up for the subcommittees, apply for observer status, learn more about participating in the public review and comment process or to join the Sustainable Agriculture Standard email list, contact Amanda Raster at Leonardo Academy: amanda@leonardoacademy.org, (608) 280-0255.