Madison, WI, June 18, 2010 – Leonardo Academy reports significant progress during the third face-to-face meeting of the multi-stakeholder Standards Committee that is working to develop an American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture.

During the two-day meeting at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, Standards Committee members discussed, and then voted to approve, guiding sustainability principles developed by the Economic, Social, and Environmental Criteria Subcommittees. Principles related to farm management and planning; labor rights; biodiversity; water, soil, and air pollution; soil health, fertility, and productivity; farm inputs and outputs; and greenhouse gases will now move forward as the basis for criteria, indicators, and metrics. In addition, the Committee members approved structure and process documents designed to facilitate standards development.

“We have come a long way since our meeting in St. Charles last year,” said Committee member Jim Pierce, representing the Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association. “In addition to assuring the subcommittees that they are on the right track, we are thoughtfully addressing matters related to standard structure, as well as the development process itself, which will help to ensure successful standards writing as we continue to move forward.”

Additionally, the Committee voted in favor of a timeline to facilitate the completion of the standard by the fall of 2012. “The Standards Committee and subcommittees have been working together amazingly well—way beyond my expectations,” said Committee member Russell Williams, who represents the American Farm Bureau. Moving forward, the Standards Committee and chartered subcommittees will complete the remaining guiding principles and begin developing metrics and indicators to support fulfillment of the principles set forth for agricultural sustainability.

In other business, Leonardo Academy, the 501(c)(3) ANSI-accredited standards developer (ASD) facilitating the process, responded to questions related to the ownership of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard. It was reported that Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), who initiated the national discussion and has provided significant financial support, has no claim on copyright of the final product.

“Leonardo Academy is tremendously grateful to SCS for its generous support of the process,” said Michael Arny, Leonardo Academy’s president. “We would also like to recognize Dr. Marty Matlock and the University of Arkansas for hosting the meeting, as well as Organic Valley and Stonyfield Farms for their generous donations to help support the attendance of underfunded participants at the meeting. The success of this standards development effort is contingent on broad stakeholder participation and a strong donor base.” In addition, the Standards Committee thanked Dr. Matlock, outgoing Committee Chairman, for his service. Nominations for the new Chair will take place in early July.

Fifty Committee members and eighteen observers participated in the meeting. Presentations,
motions, and approved subcommittee work items will be posted on the Sustainable Agriculture Standard wiki early next week (http://sites.google.com/site/sustainableagstandards/). To learn more about the Sustainable Agriculture Standard, visit http://www.leonardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard.html.

To make a tax deductible donation to support the Sustainable Agriculture Standard development process, go to http://www.leonardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard/donate.html.

About Leonardo Academy

Mission Statement
Leonardo Academy is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing sustainability by leveraging innovative tools and information to motivate the competitive market. By utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability strategies, education and implementation, we strive to make sustainability practical for everyone.

We develop integrative sustainability solutions designed to enhance the environmental stewardship, social responsibility and economic prosperity of organizations, corporations and individuals. We see a world filled with sustainable opportunities that can transform the way we live today and ensure the prosperity of future generations.

Programs and Services
Leonardo Academy works on a broad range of sustainability issues and provides comprehensive sustainability services to help companies, organizations, families and individuals implement sustainability. Our programs and services include: organizational sustainability assessments and implementation; emissions footprints, reduction strategies and offsets; LEED® assessments, implementation and certification application preparation; sustainable land management; sustainability training; and sustainability standards development.

For more information about Leonardo Academy visit: www.leonardoacademy.org
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