Madison, Wisconsin, July 16, 2010 – Leonardo Academy has launched a fundraising campaign to support the continued development of the American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture. The goal of the standard is to provide guidance for continuous improvement in sustainable agriculture practices, as well as a basis for clear communication between buyers and sellers on the sustainability profile of agricultural products. The initial phase of the standard development process focuses on the production of agricultural goods within the farm gate. Additional components of the agricultural supply chain will be addressed in subsequent modules.

The Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee held its third face-to-face meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas in June, where a number of significant accomplishments regarding the standard development process took place. Great progress was made regarding the approval of initial environmental, economic, and social sustainability principles for the standard; the approval of the process for coordinating the work of the Standards Committee and the subcommittees; and the approval of a timeline to complete the first phase of the standard by late 2012.

With the Sustainable Agriculture Standard development process in full force, Leonardo Academy has launched a fundraising campaign to raise the funding necessary to fully support the continued facilitation of this growing initiative. The objective of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard is to establish a comprehensive, continual improvement framework and common set of economic, environmental, and social metrics by which to determine whether an agricultural crop has been produced in a sustainable manner. The standard will provide producers with a credible set of tools and metrics for incrementally advancing their sustainability performance, as well as a common benchmark against which to communicate their achievements.

Leonardo Academy’s work on the project includes coordination and support of the Standards Committee and subcommittee work; committee meetings and conference calls; communications, outreach, and education; travel support for under-funded Committee members; tool development and maintenance, and more. Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), the initiator and seed funder of the standard development process since 2007, provided funding for the first three years of the process.

Michael Arny, president of Leonardo Academy said, “We greatly appreciate SCS’ generous financial support since the inception of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard. Now that their contribution has ended, it is time for other stakeholders to step up and provide financial support..."
Fundraising Campaign Launched for Development of the National Sustainable Agriculture Standard

to help build this important standard. We value support at any level and appreciate all contributions made on behalf of this effort. We also welcome the participation of all agricultural stakeholders, including producers, processors, agricultural product manufacturers, and retailers, as well as environmental groups, labor groups, academics, and government representatives.”

The Sustainable Agriculture Standard Support Flyer includes more information on the standard development process, the list of current Standards Committee members, Leonardo Academy’s annual budget for the project, and the estimated annual value of the in kind contribution of process participants: [http://www.leonardoacademy.org/download/Ag%20Std%20Financial%20Support%20Flyer_062210.pdf](http://www.leonardoacademy.org/download/Ag%20Std%20Financial%20Support%20Flyer_062210.pdf).

There are two ways to make a contribution:
Or by mail: (payable to Leonardo Academy) 328 E. Lakeside Street, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53715

Leonardo Academy is a charitable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Michael Arny, continued, “We are implementing a summer recess for several of the standard development subcommittees from mid-July through August. The Structure & Process Subcommittee will continue to meet to work through the process issues related to the development of subcommittee work items that were brought to our attention at the June Standards Committee meeting. The Social Criteria Development Subcommittee will also continue to meet in order to finish up the Labor Rights Principles. Additionally, this short recess will give Leonardo Academy time to raise sufficient funding to support this project over the next year. It is critical that companies, foundations, and individuals step up now to provide financial support of this process. We are confident that, with support from the broad range of stakeholders participating in this effort, we will meet our fundraising goals.”

For questions regarding fundraising, contact Jennifer Trucks at (608) 280-0255.

**About Leonardo Academy**

*Mission Statement*
Leonardo Academy is a charitable 501(c)(3) 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 programs and 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.

END

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