Call for Applications: Four Open Seats on the National Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee

Madison, WI, July 20, 2010 – Leonardo Academy is seeking applications for four vacant seats on the National Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee, within the User, Environmentalist and General Interest categories. Individuals or representatives of entities that use agricultural goods, such as product handlers, processors, distributors, manufacturers, food service companies, retailers and restaurants, as well as labor groups, consumer groups, agricultural development 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 and the Standards Committee
The 58-member Standards Committee is working to develop a national standard for sustainable agriculture 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 and distributors; food retailers; environmental, labor, and development organizations; NGOs; industry trade associations; government representatives; academics; regulators and certifiers.

Supporting the Standards Committee are six subcommittees that have been working since July 2009 to develop the structure of the standard; draft economic, environmental, and social criteria for possible inclusion in the standard; develop communications materials for process stakeholders, and collect resources to include in the Sustainable Agriculture Standard Reference Library. For more information on the subcommittee work, visit: https://sites.google.com/site/sustainableagstandards/.

Leonardo Academy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing sustainability, is providing facilitation and process support for the Sustainable Agriculture Standard development initiative.

How to Apply for Standards Committee Membership
To receive an application for membership on the Standards Committee, contact Amanda Raster at Leonardo Academy: amanda@leonardoacademy.org or (608) 280-0255, or visit http://www.leonardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard/development.html.
Applications must be submitted by 12:00 pm CDT on Thursday, August 19, 2010. The new Committee members will be announced during the first week of September. Individuals who have 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 Sustainable Agriculture 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. Six subcommittees — 1) Economic Criteria Development, 2) Environmental Criteria Development, 3) Social Criteria Development, 4) Structure and Process, 5) Reference Library and Information and 6) Fundraising and Communications — are currently developing the structure of the standard, along with draft criteria, indicators and metrics; supporting Leonardo Academy’s outreach and fundraising efforts related to the standard; continuing to acquire resources for the Sustainable Agriculture Standard Reference Library; and providing additional recommendations and guidance to the Standards Committee.

Observers – Observers are invited to participate in the 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.