Madison, WI, March 31, 2011 – Leonardo Academy announced the kick-off of the 2011 fundraising campaign for the development of the National Sustainable Agriculture Standard. This historic initiative includes participation from a wide spectrum of participants representing American production agriculture, retail and manufacturing entities, academia, government agencies, and other interested stakeholders. Together, participants are seeking to develop a widely inclusive, far-reaching standard for sustainable agriculture based on the internationally-recognized American National Standards Institute process.

Michael Arny, President of Leonardo Academy said, “Since this standard-setting process was launched, we have made excellent progress on a very complex subject. Our 2011 fundraising campaign will help us move this unprecedented effort toward the successful development of a standard, providing valuable guidance to growers, purchasers and consumers alike. We would like to extend an invitation to individuals, organizations and companies to make a donation of any size for this important initiative. This standard will bring solutions to the future of U.S. agriculture and the sustainability of our food system.”

Leonardo Academy is a nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

- To donate online: [http://www.leonardoacademy.org/donate/support-agriculture.html](http://www.leonardoacademy.org/donate/support-agriculture.html)
- To donate by mail: Leonardo Academy, P.O. Box 5425, Madison, WI 53705-0425

The need for a National Sustainable Agriculture Standard is immense and growing. The Sustainable Agriculture Committee is addressing issues such as food security; environment protection; the well-being of farmers, farm workers, and farm communities; climate change; energy efficiency; and economic prosperity.

One of the unique features of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) process is that it is transparent and open to all interested stakeholders, with opportunities to participate in the process at all levels. “Farmers, product handlers, processors, distributors, manufacturers, food service companies, retailers and restaurants, labor groups, consumer groups, agricultural development NGOs, academia, and others are encouraged to engage in this national dialogue on sustainable agriculture,” said Arny.

About the Sustainable Agriculture Standard and the Standards Committee
There are 58 seats on the Standards Committee to accommodate a broad range of
perspectives. The Standards Committee is working to develop a national standard for sustainable agriculture under the rules of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The Standards Committee consists of a skilled, diverse membership representing a broad range of perspectives from across all areas of agriculture, including commodity and specialty crop producers; agricultural product processors and distributors; food retailers; environmental, labor, and development organizations; NGOs; 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 Jennifer Trucks at Leonardo Academy: jennifer@leonardoacademy.org or 608-280-0255, or visit http://leonardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard/development.html.

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 Jennifer Trucks at Leonardo Academy: jennifer@leonardoacademy.org or 608-280-0255.