Standards Committee Makes Strides toward Developing National Sustainable Agriculture Standard at Annual Meeting

Madison, WI, May 2, 2010 – Leonardo Academy reports that significant progress was made during its fourth national face-to-face meeting of the multi-stakeholder Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee. Standards Committee members and observers convened at Gap Corporate headquarters in San Francisco, California, and those participating remotely were able to join the meeting online.

Standards Committee members discussed and then passed motions to approve the alignment of the principle statements including criteria, indicators and metrics developed by the economic, environmental and social criteria development subcommittees. These subcommittees play a key role in the standard development process because they are responsible for developing the specific proposed sustainability requirements for their subject areas. These requirements are then reviewed and approved by the Standards Committee.

The committee approved the proposal for an agricultural production sustainability plan to support producers in developing their implementation strategies to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard. They passed motions on proposals for the future tiers and scoring structures of the draft standard, which would provide participants with meaningful sustainability achievements even at the lowest tier.

Committee Chairman Brian McElroy, Organic Supply Manager of Driscoll’s Strawberry Associates, said, “This is the only transparent agricultural sustainability standards development process in place in the US at this time. This meeting was populated by professionals that are
prepared to do the job at hand. The meeting was open and collaborative across multi-stakeholder lines. With the establishment of principals and a rock solid format for writing standards, we have a clear vision to move forward. This year the participants will be dealing with the details of standards writing. For anyone who wants to have an impact on the development of sustainability standards for agriculture in America, now is the time to get involved with Leonardo Academy in this process.”

Michael Arny, President of Leonardo Academy, said, “This was a very productive meeting due to the hard work, preparation and participation of Chairman Brian McElroy, the Gap, Project Manager Jennifer Trucks of Leonardo Academy, the Coordinating Committee members and all the participants and observers. Leonardo Academy would like to express our gratitude to the Gap and Kindley Walsh-Lawlor, Vice President of Social and Environmental Responsibility, for being a great host for this important event. I would like to echo Brian McElroy’s invitation to all those interested in fostering sustainable agriculture for present and future generations to join the effort. Everyone can contribute to the success of this effort by participating as a Standards Committee or subcommittee member, as an observer, or by making a charitable contribution to support this historic standard development process today.”

Elections were held appointing members into positions of subcommittee leadership. The newest members of the Standards Committee received a warm welcome. Finally, the committee members approved holding remote quarterly meetings going forward, in addition to their annual, in-person meetings to expedite and monitor progress.

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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](http://www.leonardoacademy.org/programs/standards/agstandard/donate.html).

**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 the ANSI-accredited standards development organization that is managing the development of the Sustainable Agriculture standard development process.

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.

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, (608) 280-0255, or visit http://www.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, 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.

Join Our Work
Individuals, organizations and companies are invited to join in Leonardo Academy’s work on advancing sustainability. One important way to join in our work is by making a charitable donation to support these efforts. Online donations can be made at: http://www.leonardoacademy.org.

For more information about Leonardo Academy:
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Phone: 608-280-0255
Email: info@leonardoacademy.org

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