Madison, WI, September 1, 2011 – Leonardo Academy hosted the first remote quarterly meeting of the multi-stakeholder Sustainable Agriculture Standards Committee on Thursday, August 25. The motion was passed in April by the committee to hold three remote meetings in addition to the annual, in-person meeting to increase the pace of the development process. Standards Committee members and observers discussed via a conference call the results of the current work of identifying sustainability criteria and indicators for the performance-based national standard. The group went on to outline goals for the next phase of drafting sustainability metrics.

Committee Chairman Brian McElroy, Organic Supply Manager of Driscoll's Strawberry Associates, said, “I am pleased to say that Leonardo Academy held a successful meeting on August 25 with the entire Standards Committee. Both the Environmental and Economic Criteria Development Subcommittees reported on their significant progress since the Committee’s annual meeting in April. An estimated 30 active participants attended the conference call to review progress and exchange ideas. Subcommittees are making progress identifying the key sustainability criteria and indicators for the draft standard. Criteria and indicators are very specific topics that will help define sustainable agricultural production. Now is the time for all those interested in sustainable agriculture to get involved. The standard development process is an open, transparent one and any member of the public may participate in some tangible way. We continue to work toward finishing a draft standard for public review by April 2012.”

Leonardo Academy President Michael Arny added, “This was a very productive meeting due to the hard work of the Coordinating Committee and subcommittee members since the April Standards Committee Meeting. As Chairman Brian McElroy said, now is the time to get involved. We continue to work toward finishing a draft standard for public review by April 2012. Apply to join a subcommittee today!”

**Funding**

Driscoll’s Strawberry Associates and Organic Valley both contributed $5000 to support the development process this quarter. Michael Arny officially thanked the funders at the meeting.

**New Member Announced**

The Standards Committee welcomed new member Peggy Barlett to the Standards Committee, Professor of Anthropology at Emory University, and a specialist in agricultural anthropology and sustainability in higher education. She is the co-founder of the Piedmont Project at Emory, the longest running curriculum development program for sustainability in the country. She manages
workshops for the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). She also leads Emory’s Sustainable Food Initiative that supports eight educational food gardens, developed a farmers market on campus, and has set bold goals for local and sustainably-grown food in dining halls and hospitals. Ms. Barlett has recently been named to the National Research Council Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources. She is active in the Atlanta Local Food Initiative.

Contact:
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About the Sustainable Agriculture Standard and the Standards Committee

There are 60 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 Subcommittee or Standards Committee Membership

To receive an application for membership on a subcommittee or 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: www.leonardoacademy.org.

For more information about Leonardo Academy:
Web: www.leonardoacademy.org
Phone: 608-280-0255
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