

For Immediate Release

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Madison, WI, November 10, 2015. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved the ANSI/LEO-4000 American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture, developed by Leonardo Academy and the LEO-4000 Standard Development Committee through ANSI's open, multi-stakeholder process. LEO-4000 currently addresses agricultural crops and plans to address animal production in the future. ANSI/LEO-4000 empowers all levels of the agricultural supply chain to increase the sustainability of agricultural production around the world.

Michael Arny, President of Leonardo Academy said, "We invite everyone to join in using LEO-4000 to advance sustainability in agriculture. We have been developing the American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture (ANSI/LEO-4000) since 2007, so it is fantastic for it to be approved by ANSI. We thank all the Standard Committee members, other process participants, and the public commenters who have contributed their time and effort. We encourage all potential users, both producers to consumers, to use this standard as a powerful tool to advance the sustainability of agricultural production."

ANSI/LEO-4000 helps businesses and consumers navigate the increasingly confusing range of proprietary sustainability labels, specifications, information requests, and guides for agricultural products. The Standard replaces market confusion with clarity by providing the most comprehensive benchmarking standard for sustainable agriculture. Consumers can rely on the guidance of the LEO-4000 Certification Seal, and producers can reduce the number of different versions of sustainability reports they need to prepare.

The Standard provides clear communication among all levels of the supply chain—from producers, processors, manufacturers, distributors, foodservice providers, retailers to consumers—about the sustainability level of the food, fiber, and other agriculture products being purchased and sold. This information exchange operates both up and down the supply chain. Sellers of agricultural products can clearly communicate sustainability achievements to buyers, while buyers of agricultural products can clearly communicate their desired level of sustainability achievement to sellers.

ANSI/LEO-4000 assures the authenticity of sustainable agricultural product claims by providing third party verification of sustainable agriculture achievements. As a benchmarking standard, it allows comparison of the levels of sustainability performance across all the participating producers and therefore provides practical guidance to producers on implementing sustainable agricultural practices and tracking their achievements.

ANSI/LEO-4000 provides consistency and flexibility for producers to implement sustainability actions. It has 4 achievement levels: bronze, silver, gold, or platinum. Each achievement level requires that specific prerequisites be met and that a specified number of optional actions be chosen and implemented.

To use the Standard, the producer, processor, manufacturer, distributor, food service provider, retailer, or consumer registers with Leonardo Academy. Leonardo Academy provides training, reference guides, and implementation tracking tools for each type of user.

Users hire a Leonardo Academy approved performance verifier to verify level of sustainable performance. Leonardo Academy then provides the LEO-4000 Certification Seal communicating verified level of performance along with the requirements on how the seal is to be used by each type of program participant.

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:

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