



For Immediate Release

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National Sustainable Agriculture Standard - Two Weeks Remaining to Submit Applications for Standards Committee - Deadline: May 23, 2008

Madison, WI – May 9, 2008 – Two weeks remain to submit applications to participate on the Standards Committee that will work toward development of an American National Standard for sustainable agriculture. Stakeholders interested in working on specific advisory subcommittees are also encouraged to apply during this period.

Interest in this standard continues to grow among the public and materially affected parties. Since the February 29, 2008 stakeholder meeting in Arlington, Leonardo Academy has received a surge of applications to participate on the Standards Committee and advisory subcommittees. All interested and affected stakeholders—such as growers, processors, food processors, food service companies, retailers, government representatives, consumer groups, environmental NGOs, labor groups and representatives, and other interested parties—have a role to play in shaping the final standard and are encouraged to apply.

Developing a Standard for Sustainable Agriculture Practice

The Sustainable Agriculture Practice Standard is being developed in response to rising interest in practicing, defining, standardizing, and certifying sustainable agriculture. Working within an open consensus process, this national standardization initiative is intended to provide a forum for discussing and vetting differences over what sustainability means within the agricultural sector and to capture the collective wisdom of pioneering individuals and organizations in the realm of sustainable agriculture.

Establishing a national standard for sustainable agriculture practices has the opportunity to serve many purposes, including:

- Defining sustainability practices and indicators throughout the supply chain on a life-cycle basis
- Distinguishing best practices in crop production and handling
- Guiding producers and handlers through stages of incremental improvement
- Providing a common set of metrics to gauge sustainability progress—whether in a private supply chain, an industry sector, or on a state/regional/national scale
- Setting a reference benchmark for private sustainability efforts

The current initiative was launched with the publication last year of a Draft American Standard for Trial Use: *Sustainable Agriculture Practice for Food Fiber and Biofuel Crop Producers and Agricultural Product Handlers and Processors (SCS-001)*. Within the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard development process, a draft standard for trial use represents a beginning, not an end. A draft standard serves as a starting point from which stakeholder discussions can ensue and is intended to stimulate dialogue on key issues, such as the multiple interpretations of sustainability as it applies to agriculture, which must be addressed in order to establish a finalized American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture Practice that is both practical and functional for the end-user.



Role of the Standards Committee

The Standards Committee will review and deliberate each component of the draft standard. This includes defining sustainable agriculture practices within the scope of this standard and addressing both the general and sector-specific needs of the specific agricultural crop sectors that this standard will include. The final draft standard will be subject to public review and comment by materially affected parties prior to submission to ANSI. Ultimately, the Standards Committee will decide what is in the final standard that will be submitted for approval as an American National Standard. For this reason, all interested parties and stakeholders are invited to participate in the development process of this standard by serving on the Standards Committee or a non-voting advisory subcommittee.

How to Apply

All parties and materially affected stakeholders interested in the development process of the Sustainable Agriculture Practice Standard are invited to apply to participate on the Standards Committee or one of the advisory subcommittees. **PLEASE NOTE:** In the event that a Standards Committee member is not able to attend a meeting, an alternate from their organization can be appointed to serve as a proxy for that meeting. The committee application form, information on the time commitment for committee members and frequency/location of committee meetings, as well as more information about this initiative, can be found at: <http://www.leonardoacademy.org/Projects/SustainAgStdDevelopment.htm>.

Applications for participation should be submitted no later than **Friday, May 23, 2008**. Applications will be reviewed in full in order to achieve a balanced dispersion of qualifications and expertise on the Standards Committee. All applicants will be informed of their committee status no later than **Monday, June 16, 2008**.

Funding

Leonardo Academy is seeking financial assistance from foundations, companies and organizations with an interest in sustainability issues to aid in the development of this standard, to provide small farmers with financial and technical assistance in testing the Sustainable Agriculture Draft Standard for Trial Use and to provide financial assistance to non-profits to cover the costs of their participation. If you are interested in donating financial resources to support this project, please contact the Leonardo Academy.

For Additional Information

Please visit the Sustainable Agriculture Practice Draft Standard for Trial Use web page:
<http://www.leonardoacademy.org/Projects/SustainAgStdDevelopment.htm>.

Contact Leonardo Academy:

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Outreach Efforts to Date

The Sustainable Agriculture Practice Draft Standard for Trial Use was announced by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) in the spring of 2007. In September 2007, standard development responsibilities were transferred from the NSF International to Leonardo Academy. Since that time, Leonardo Academy and SCS have been promoting awareness of the Draft Standard for Trial Use, the ANSI process, and the opportunity for stakeholder participation. Numerous press releases and announcements have been distributed nationally to inform interested parties and stakeholders about this standard development process. In addition, two stakeholder meetings and three teleconferences have been held to identify sustainable agriculture issues and to further encourage involvement in the development of this standard. Additional outreach efforts have included information distribution at major conferences and trade shows throughout the year, as well as workshops.

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