



## AUDIT INFORMATION AND EXPECTATION

### LEAF MARQUE

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## 1. GENERAL

The present document concerns:

- LEAF Marque CERTIFICATION: Standard Version 15.0
- and is applied together with
- Q-CERT's "F-2711 Audit Information and Expectation GG Crops"

The LEAF Marque Standard:

- Is applicable globally and is used in all inspections regardless of country and enterprise.
- Covers the whole farm business, including sites and fields managed centrally.
- Applies to all products from the whole farm business and is not limited to defined crops or enterprises within the business.

### **1.1 Certification Options**

The LEAF Marque Standard is additional and complementary to the farm assurance schemes:

- GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Standards
- GLOBALG.A.P. Option 2
- GLOBALG.A.P. Benchmarked Schemes

The LEAF Marque Standard further builds on the environmental aspects. As a whole farm approach, there must be baseline certification from a LEAF Marque approved certification system for all products within the business.

According to the above the Certification Options for businesses with baseline certification are:

**Option I {Individual Certification}**: the individual producer is the certificate holder once certified.

**Option I {Multisite without implementation of a QMS}**: individual producer or one organization owns several production sites that do not function as separate legal entities.

**Option I {Multisite with Implementation of a QMS}**: individual producer or one organization owns several production sites that do not function as separate entities, but where a QMS has been implemented.

**Option II {Producers group with obligatory QMS}**: a producer group applies for group certification. The group as a legal entity, is the certificate holder once certified.

### **1.2 Exemption Criteria**

If a business does not have an approved baseline system for all the business' products (i.e. if "Other" has been selected from the LEAF Product List, or if the approved baseline system as stated on the LEAF Product List is not

held), LEAF Marque has developed the criteria for these products which are exempt from this requirement, and are as follows:

- Minor products which do not contribute a significant commercial value to the business are exempt if the outcome of these activities is not detrimental to the farm as a whole. These products should not take up a significant part of the business' time or land.
- Products for which there is not a baseline certification system are exempt if the outcome of these activities is not detrimental to the farm as a whole.

In these circumstances, these products will not appear on the LEAF Marque Certificate, and the following rules must be adhered to:

- The requirements of the LEAF Marque Standard apply to the whole business enterprise regardless of whether the products grown appear on the LEAF Product List.
- Any cultivated products which are not covered by a LEAF Marque approved baseline system must:
  - ✓ not be marketed or sold as LEAF Marque certified (either through use of the LEAF Marque logo or in other marketing and communication materials)
  - ✓ be included in 'Production Information' within the 'myProfile' section of 'myLEAF', along with the respective production area
  - ✓ be identified as a product without an approved baseline system at the LEAF Marque audit and confirmed as such by the auditor

### **1.3 LEAF Marque Claims**

A LEAF Marque claim is either or both of the following:

- Use of the LEAF Marque logo at point of sale regardless of the format. For example, use on pack, on a website selling products, or a sign next to a product being sold are all LEAF Marque claims.
  - ✓ Using the LEAF Marque logo in communications or on boxes transporting produce **is not** a LEAF Marque claim.
- A sustainability claim directly referencing LEAF Marque certification that is used to set apart and promote a product, process, business or service. If this claim directly references LEAF Marque, a LEAF Marque claim is made. It does not include instances where LEAF Marque is used as part of businesses internal sustainability strategy. As above, this applies to claims made in any format (e.g. on pack, online etc.).

### **1.4 Registration Process**

LEAF Marque Membership is the contract signed between Q-CERT and the business:

- It is valid for one (1) year.
- It is the responsibility of the business to renew its contract/relationship with Q-CERT.

LEAF Charity Membership is the contract signed between LEAF and the business.

On creation of LEAF Marque Membership, each business will be allocated a unique 5 or 6 digit LEAF Marque Number. This number is allocated to the business and remains the same if the business transfers to different CBs.

The membership category for both LEAF Charity Membership and LEAF Marque Membership should be as closely aligned with the LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system membership as possible. For example, GLOBALG.A.P. Option 2 members should have LEAF and LEAF Marque Producer Group membership, and GLOBALG.A.P. Option 1 members should have LEAF and LEAF Marque individual membership.

### **1.5 The Applicant (Business)**

It is the responsibility of any business making a LEAF Marque claim to identify whether they are the relevant License Holder for that product.

The relevant License Holder will be either of the following:

- Primary supplier into retailers/food service. Also known as ‘first tier suppliers’, this is the business supplying directly into the retailer or food service outlet.
- Brand Owner. The owner of the brand under which the product is sold. The brand owner can be the producer (e.g. Farrington's Oils), or a separate business entity (e.g. Jordan's Cereals). A producer making a LEAF Marque claim on products sold under the farm name (e.g. at farm gate, farm website), they would also be a brand owner. Retailers are not classified as brand owners.

Once the business has identified they are the relevant License Holder, a C&L License Application must be made. The process is described in *LEAF Marque Claims & Labelling Guidance Document Version 2.1 – March 2020*.

Products entered should not include cover crops.

### **1.6 Certification Scope**

From the 1st January 2020, LEAF Marque certificates will list a business' certified products. LEAF Marque certification is a whole farm approach, and all of a business' products must be included within an audit and listed on the certificate. In exceptional circumstance where the exemption criteria stated in the LEAF Marque Standard is met, a business' product may not be listed on the certificate.

However, the product cannot be marketed as LEAF Marque certified and must comply with the LEAF Marque Standard and LEAF Product List.

### **1.7 LEAF Marque Certificate and Certification Cycle**

LEAF Marque certification is valid for a period of 12 months in which the 'valid to' date corresponds to the initial date of certification (e.g. certification first issued 1st September 2019, certificates renewed 1st September 2020, 1st September 2021).

There must be an audit for each time LEAF Marque certification is renewed. If Q-CERT requires to see the business operations at different times of year, the audit can take place 4 months prior to or after the certificate 'valid to' date. The certification cycle would remain the same regardless of the audit date.

The exception to the above is where the business wants to align the LEAF Marque certification cycle with the LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system cycle. In this instance, the certification cycle can be changed to match the first certification date that aligns with the LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system certificate (e.g. certification first issued 1st September 2019, certification for LEAF Marque and baseline system issued 15th January 2020, certificate renewed 15th January 2021, 15th January 2022).

The business can also have different certification cycles for different certification systems.

The LEAF Marque Certificate can only be issued to the applicant legal entity.

### **1.8 Maintenance of LEAF Marque Certification**

The business's registration as well as the proposed products for the relevant scopes must be annually confirmed by Q-CERT before the expiry date.

The inspector must complete the entire checklist and verification process annually.

### **1.9 Subsequent Inspections**

On all subsequent audits, if a non-conformance against (an) Essential Control Point(s) is identified, it must be resolved by 28 days. If this deadline is exceeded the business must reapply to Q-CERT for another audit.

Q-CERT is entitled to perform unannounced audits, either as decided by Q-CERT or on direction from LEAF Marque.

### **1.10 Certification Process**

For a business' first audit, if a non-conformance against (an) Essential Control Point(s) are identified, the business has 3 months to resolve them. If this deadline is exceeded the business must reapply to Q-CERT for another audit.

### **1.11 Registration with a new CB**

Businesses can change CB at any time but should inform the new CB of any previous certification and membership information.

A review of this information must be completed before the certificate status can be confirmed and transferred.

Each CB has the right to reject the transfer application if there are outstanding non-conformances still to be rectified or any other certification or membership conditions which have been imposed which prevent the application from being accepted.

Non-conformances must be resolved, and any corresponding conditions must be accepted by both the previous and new CB before a transfer can take place.

### **1.12 Assessment Process**

The first audit will take place by arrangement between Q-CERT and the business, at a time that enables an effective and representative audit. Audits can occur either at the same time as the LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system(s) audit, or as a stand-alone audit.

Prior to the audit:

- The business must have prepared all relevant documentation and records.
- And at least one week before
  - ✓ an LSFR (LEAF Sustainable Farming Review) profile report must be available for Q-CERT to download
  - ✓ production information and management reports should be updated
- And at least 9 months before, LEAF Marque Standard requires that the LSFR has been completed.

The business must adhere to the version of the Standard that is applicable at the time of the audit, and:

- Has to fully comply with all the Essential (E) Control Points within the Standard.
- Compliance with the Recommended (R) Control Points is preferable, and they may become Essential Control Points in the future.
- Some Control Points may be Not-Applicable (N/A) as determined within the Standard.
- Products listed for certification are applicable to the farming year/certification cycle.

In case of LEAF Producer Group Certification:

- A minimum of one internal inspection per annum of each registered producer within the LEAF Producer Group must be carried out either by qualified staff within the LEAF Producer Group, a qualified external

advisor, a qualified consultant or subcontracted to an external verification body which is separate from Q-CERT. This annual internal inspection:

- ✓ must be conducted against the current LEAF Marque Standard valid version.
- ✓ must be completed before the external verification by Q-CERT.
- Audit of the QMS occurs once before certification; subsequent inspections must be repeated annually.
  - ✓ This audit must demonstrate compliance to the criteria set out by LEAF Marque and the GLOBALG.A.P. regulations.
  - ✓ Where Q-CERT identifies nonconformance(s) with the QMS, including systematic failure, this prevents certification unless evidence of rectification is approved by Q-CERT within the appropriate timescale.
  - ✓ As defined in the LEAF Marque system rules, businesses have 3 months from the first inspection to rectify any non-conformance(s). For all subsequent inspections, businesses have 28 days to rectify non-conformance(s).
  - ✓ External audit is annual. Selection is made by taking a random sample that as a minimum is the square root of the total number in the LEAF Producer Group. The sample takes into account factors such as crops grown, location, size of production site, volume supplied, internal inspector(s), previous audits, travel time and external influences.
  - ✓ If the producers in the LEAF Producer Group are a subset of a larger group the calculation is based on the number in the LEAF Producer Group (for example, if the GLOBALG.A.P. group is 100, Q-CERT completes 10 producer inspections, if the LEAF Producer Group is 36 of the 100 then Q-CERT will complete 6 LEAF Marque inspections).

In the following tables the assessment process is summarized.

<b>Option I and Option I Multisite without QMS</b>	
	Evaluations (Initial and subsequent)
Self-assessments by the producer	Entire scope (all registered sites)
Externally by Q-Cert	Announced inspection of entire scope (all registered sites) After initial certification: Unannounced inspection (to a minimum 10% of certificate holders)

<b>Option II and Option I Multisite with QMS</b>		
	<b>Initial Evaluations</b>	<b>Subsequent Evaluations</b>
Internally by the producer	1. Internal QMS audit	1. Internal QMS audit



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<b>Option II and Option I Multisite with QMS</b>		
	<b>Initial Evaluations</b>	<b>Subsequent Evaluations</b>
group and Option I Multisite operation with QMS	2. Internal inspection of each registered producer/production site and all product handling units	2. Internal inspection of each registered producer/production site and all product handling units
Externally by Q-CERT	<p><b>First visit</b></p> <p>1. Announced QMS audit + Square root of the total number of registered central product handling units while in operation.</p> <p>2. Announced inspection of (minimum) square root of registered producer/production sites.</p> <p><b>Second visit (surveillance)</b></p> <p>3. Surveillance inspection of (minimum) 50% square root of certified producers/production sites.</p>	<p><b>First visit</b></p> <p>1. Announced QMS audit</p> <p>2.a) If there is sanction from previous surveillance: Inspection of (minimum) square root of actual number of registered producers / production sites; or</p> <p>2.b) If there is no sanction from previous surveillance: inspection of (minimum) square root of actual number of registered producers/ production sites minus the number of producers/ production sites inspected during the previous surveillance inspection.</p> <p><b>Second visit (surveillance)</b></p> <p>3. Surveillance inspection of (minimum) 50% square root of the actual number of certified producers/production sites.</p>
Product Handling Inspections externally by Q-CERT	<p><b>During first or second visit:</b></p> <p>If there is only one central product handling facility, it shall be inspected every year while in operation.</p> <p>When there are more than one central product handling facility, the square root of the total number of central product handling units registered shall be inspected while in operation.</p> <p>Where the product handling does not take place centrally, but on the farms of the producer members, this factor shall be taken into account when determining the sample of producers to be inspected.</p>	
Unannounced QMS audits externally by Q-CERT	Additional unannounced QMS audit of 10% of certificate holders with QMS	

### **1.13 Certification Decision**

Q-CERT must make the certification decision within a maximum of 28 calendar days after closure of any outstanding non-conformances.

Businesses will be notified in writing either at the time of their audit, or soon afterwards, if there are any non-conformances against Essential Control Points that must be resolved before LEAF Marque certification can be awarded.

In case no non-conformances are detected during the inspection/audit, it means that Q-CERT must make the decision no later than 28 days after the end of the inspection/audit.

## **2. APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

If an applicant renews its contract/relationship with Q-CERT but does not pay the associated fee on time, the LEAF Marque Membership status will be changed to 'Grace'.

If the payment is not made within 3 months, LEAF Marque Membership will be 'Closed' and certification status changed to 'Withdrawn'.

LEAF Marque certified businesses must notify Q-CERT of any inspection or activity that identifies a lack of compliance with any legislative requirement, LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system requirement or the LEAF Marque Standard.

Claims & Labelling (C&L) is effective from the 1st January 2020. Businesses have until the 30th September 2020 to understand and obtain a C&L Licence and to comply with the C&L Licence Agreement, LEAF Marque Claim Rules, and LEAF Style Guidelines, as is appropriate to the business.

It is the responsibility of any business making a LEAF Marque claim to identify whether they are the relevant Licence Holder for that product.

Any business engaged with the LEAF Marque System must comply with all applicable regional and national laws, conducting business lawfully and with integrity.

If a business' product(s) change after their audit, Production Information should be updated either via the LEAF Sustainable Farming Review or LEAF Charity membership details, and Q-CERT should be informed. In addition, further action should be taken dependent on the following scenarios apply:

- If the product has a LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system, the business can still be certified if the LEAF Marque Standard requirements are applied to the product, and if the product is not sold as LEAF Marque certified. If the business wishes to sell the product as LEAF Marque certified, a new audit is necessary.
- If the product does not have a LEAF Marque approved baseline certification system, the product must meet the exemption criteria stated in Control Point 1.2 of the LEAF Marque Standard. If the criteria is not met, the business' LEAF Marque certification will be revoked. If the criteria is met, the business'

certification would remain valid as long as they meet the requirements stated above (i.e. LEAF Marque Standard applied to product, product is not sold as LEAF Marque certified etc).

- Auditors have permission to caution a business if they have not been informed about products prior to being inspected. Auditors should be aware of businesses that have multiple late additions.

### **3. Q-CERT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Q-CERT has the responsibility to update the LEAF Marque Membership of the client.

Upon request from LEAF Marque, and any agent commissioned by LEAF Marque, Q-CERT will seek permission from certified businesses, to carry out Oversight Assessment(s) on the sites of businesses certified by Q-CERT.

Q-CERT is responsible:

- When awarding LEAF Marque certification, to record the businesses certified products on LEAF Marque certificates.
- To continually check that businesses' list of products on Production Information is correct.
- To contact the LEAF Marque Team directly if unsure of whether the business meets the exemption criteria as described in §1.2 above.
- To enter and maintain updated all relevant certification information data in myLEAF which include:
  - ✓ Creation of a LEAF Marque account within 14 days after client's registration with Q-CERT
  - ✓ Renewing LEAF Marque Membership within 14 days after client's contract renewal with Q-CERT
  - ✓ Recording an Audit within 7 working days of the audit
  - ✓ Recording resolved non-conformances within 7 working days of receipt of the documentary evidence
  - ✓ Creating a certificate within 7 working days of the certification decision
  - ✓ Closing LEAF Marque Membership
  - ✓ Update/amend an existing client within 7 working days upon receiving information that impacts the certification status

### **4. SANCTIONS**

LEAF reserves the right:

- to refuse or terminate LEAF Marque Membership when it considers that it is necessary to do so, to prevent the standard system from being brought into disrepute.
- to withdraw a C&L Licence after giving one months' notice or upon immediate notice if the member fails to comply with the C&L Licence Agreement and LEAF Marque Claim Rules.

## 5. CERTIFICATION STATUS AMENDMENT

Q-CERT has the right to refuse, withdraw or amend the certification status of a member when it considers that it is necessary to do so to prevent the LEAF Marque System from being brought into disrepute.

Q-CERT has the right to immediately suspend or withdraw a LEAF Marque certificate if it receives information –from audits, surveillance, or any reliable sources – that indicates any of the following:

- The business is not maintaining the requirements of the LEAF Marque Standard.
  - The business' baseline system certification is suspended or withdrawn.
  - Any regional or national laws have been broken.
  - Requirements and legislation requiring food safety have not been achieved.
  - False or misleading statements were made on the application and/or renewal documentation, during an audit or any other communication.
- ✓ This may lead to exclusion from future membership.

## 6. NOTIFICATION AND APPEALS

If a member has reason to appeal or complain about the audit or certification process, this must first be directed Q-CERT. Q-CERT has an appeals and complaints procedure in place for its ISO 17065 accreditation which will ensure your comment is dealt with appropriately.

If the complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily or the issue relates to an issue outside the scope of Q-CERT or to the LEAF Marque Standard, then please contact LEAF Marque Ltd (Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG. Email [info@leafmarque.com](mailto:info@leafmarque.com). Tel: +44 (0) 2476 413911). CB complaints are monitored as part of the Oversight Programme, where sanctions can be enforced in instances of poor CB performance.

For a complaint about the LEAF Marque System, complaints must be submitted through the Complaints Questionnaire. LEAF Marque will deal with this complaint as set out in the Complaints Procedure.

## 7. EXTENSION OF CERTIFICATE VALIDITY

The validity of a LEAF Marque certificate can be extended to allow Q-CERT to audit the business at different times of year, or if unforeseen circumstances result in Q-CERT being unable to provide the audit as required or due to factors outside the control of the business (e.g. natural disaster, flooding, political instability). Where unforeseen circumstances do occur, approval must be sought from LEAF Marque for certification extension.

## 8. CERTIFICATION DATA USE

A list of LEAF Marque certified businesses is made publicly available on the LEAF Website and updated biannually. Only the business name is published. LEAF also reserves the right to make a list of any businesses who were previously certified but have had their certificate suspended or withdrawn publicly available.

Additional certification data is available to members of LEAF the Charity with approved access rights, to search for LEAF Marque certified businesses through the LEAF Marque checker. The information available will be the business name, LEAF Marque number, certification status, and production information.

There is further opportunity for certification data to be accessed by LEAF Charity members who chose to use the professional status tracker service, which is a commercial service. Information shared can include certification status, business name, LEAF Marque number, and product information.

Access to Data is through myLEAF. LEAF Marque businesses are able to access the following information:

- LEAF Charity Membership Certificate.
- LEAF Marque Certification Status.
- Contact Details.

## 9. USE OF LEAF MARQUE LOGO

The LEAF Marque logo is a registered trademark and must not be used in any way outside the scope of the above consent. There must not be use or authorisation of any name, mark, sign or device confusingly similar to the LEAF Marque logo.

The LEAF Marque logo must not be used on any product that:

- is not LEAF Marque certified.
- does not have certification from a LEAF Marque approved baseline system.
- has been added to the business' production after the LEAF Marque audit has been conducted.

It is the responsibility of the C&L License Holder to ensure that all products making a LEAF Marque claim contain LEAF Marque certified product(s).

C&L Licenses are individual and cannot be transferred or licensed to any other business or legal entity.