

(Madison, WI, December 19, 2013) – Leonardo Academy, a charitable organization that facilitates the development of national voluntary standards, announced the launch of the public comment period and the Standard Committee’s balloting of the National Sustainable Agriculture Standard (LEO-4000). Both the public comment period and the Standard Committee ballot will close on March 6, 2014. The ground-breaking standard, developed through the American National Standards Institute’s (ANSI) open, multi-stakeholder process, provides voluntary guidance and opportunities for recognition for producers interested in or engaged in sustainable crop production.

Michael Army, President of Leonardo Academy, said, “This four-tiered standard recognizes producers at all levels on the path toward sustainability. Thanks to the hard work of Standard Committee members, the subcommittee members, and the other process participants, the draft standard has been completed and has been released for public comment. Now is the time for producers, processors, retailers, and other interested parties to provide feedback to help the committee hone in the final document.”

LEO-4000 is intended to help users navigate the increasingly confusing range of proprietary sustainability labels, specifications, information requests, and guides for agricultural products. It is a comprehensive sustainability standard that provides a stable and reliable platform for producers to use in documenting and communicating their sustainability achievements while demonstrating compliance with other sustainability requirements and remaining flexible to meet the diverse needs of agriculture. The standard will also help food manufacturers, retailers, and consumers purchase sustainable agricultural products and assess the authenticity of sustainable agricultural product claims.

The draft standard can be downloaded at <http://leonardoacademy.org/services/standards/agstandard.html>

To submit public comments, please request a public comment form from agstandard@leonardoacademy.org