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Leading Harvest Announces Canadian Pilot with Representation Across the Agricultural Value Chain

The nonprofit agriculture sustainability organization is currently piloting its international farmland management standard in Canada with Manulife Investment Management, Bonnefield Financial, Farm Credit Canada, and McCain Foods.

ARLINGTON, VA, August 29, 2023 – Leading Harvest, an industry leader in agriculture sustainability, has announced it is piloting its innovative, third-party audited Farmland Management Standard in Canada, with plans to officially launch in the country by the end of the year. The pilot comes as the federal government works on its first sustainable agriculture strategy and just months after the launch of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector.

“Leading Harvest is a game-changer. The organization has demonstrated certification can be applied across all crop types, geographies, and management systems to provide assurance that operations are well rooted in best practices, while ensuring a commitment to robust management and continuous improvement,” said **Oliver Williams, Global Head of Agricultural Investments at Manulife Investment Management** and member of the Leading Harvest Board of Directors. “As we look forward to the launch of the Canadian program, we become one step closer to a single, comprehensive sustainability standard across the globe.”

The Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard was the first universal, outcomes-based sustainability standard to focus on continuous improvement in agriculture. Just three years after its launch in the United States, nearly 3 million acres representing more than 100 crop types globally have enrolled. Earlier this year, Leading Harvest successfully launched in Australia with enrollment across all six states.

Leading Harvest looked to Canada to continue its expansion due to the growing demand for sustainability assurance across the Canadian food and agriculture sectors.

“There is an increasingly urgent demand for verification of sustainable practices from farmers, consumers, and investors alike. Farmers, agribusiness operators, and others across the food and agriculture sectors must now deliver on ambitious commitments, and on short timelines. The rapid expansion of Leading Harvest’s Farmland Management Standard across continents and hemispheres is a testament to the need for a sector-wide, universally applicable framework for continuously improving

agricultural sustainability,” says **Kenny Fahey, President and CEO of Leading Harvest**. “With our Canadian pilot, Leading Harvest continues to demonstrate that alignment across the value chain can drive greater outcomes for all. We appreciate the leadership of our Canadian pilot participants and look forward to welcoming more food and agriculture leaders from across Canada on this journey.”

The Leading Harvest Canada pilot program has been facilitated with Anchoring Support from Manulife Investment Management and support from Bonnefield Financial, Farm Credit Canada, and McCain Foods. The pilot will adapt the same Farmland Management Standard that was implemented in the United States and Australia to Canada’s unique agronomic, regulatory, and operating environment through further stakeholder input and field testing. Leading Harvest expects to increase participation and representation from across the agricultural value chain over the course of the pilot.

More information about Leading Harvest, the Farmland Management Standard, and how to join can be found at www.LeadingHarvest.org.

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About Leading Harvest: Leading Harvest is a nonprofit organization that provides transparent standards and education to enable and validate the global transition to a more sustainable agricultural system. Its innovative, third-party audited Farmland Management Standard has been applied across diverse farming operations and crop types globally with almost 3 million acres now enrolled. It was launched in 2020 by and for stakeholders across the supply chain, from farmland owners to companies and communities, including listening sessions across regions. Leading Harvest Founding Supporters include Cargill, Nestlé, John Deere, and Nutrien Ag Solutions.