

Michael D. Arny
President, Leonardo Academy, Inc.
328 East Lakeside, Suite 201
Madison, WI 53715

Dear Mr. Arny:

U.S. farmers are concerned about the long-term sustainability of their farms and their place in society. For this reason, farmers will embrace an achievable roadmap for the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability, but only if they are part of its development. We are committed to working toward such goals in the hope that widespread adoption will contribute to real sustainability of American agriculture.

This cannot occur within the Leonardo Academy process.

A successful American National Standards Institute (ANSI) sustainable agriculture standard cannot be developed without the fair representation and participation of those representing the overwhelming majority of U.S. agriculture which constitutes 95 percent of production. Unfortunately, mainstream agriculture has been given a decidedly minor voice in Leonardo Academy's process. This is the same inequity that was initially challenged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.¹

Despite the Leonardo Academy's claim that the Committee is made up of members from "across all areas of agriculture," in reality the Committee is dominated by environmental groups, certification consultants, agro-ecology and organic farming proponents. These groups have neither the vision nor desire to speak for mainstream agriculture and the 95 percent of farmers who will be materially affected by any resulting standard.

After thoughtful consideration, the undersigned Voting Members withdraw from Leonardo Academy's initiative to develop a sustainable agriculture standard for ANSI consideration. We support the goal of sustainable agriculture and intend to continue our efforts to achieve that goal, but it has become clear that the Leonardo Academy process is biased against a balanced and open analysis of modern agriculture.

This decision was not made easily, for it means walking away from nearly two years of investment in active Leonardo Academy Committee membership, Subcommittee leadership, and writing group participation. Our willingness to participate in this

¹ Letter to Ms. Anne Caldas, Director, Procedures and Standards Administration Accreditation Services, American National Standards Institute, from Lloyd C. Day, Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA. September 11, 2008

process was predicated on a desire to produce an “on-farm” standard that would result in broad adoption. However, based on actions this summer, continued efforts cannot and will not overcome the fatal, systemic limitations and chronic biases that are inherent in the structure set up for this initiative.

Over 900 million people worldwide suffer from malnutrition today, so having a global sustainable supply of food is of prime importance. In the next 20-30 years agricultural output must *double* in order to feed and clothe this projected population growth. Success in meeting this demand will come only from productivity advances through modern farming technologies and germplasm for food, feed and fiber.

The undersigned Voting Members formally withdraw from the Leonardo Academy’s initiative to develop a sustainable agriculture standard for ANSI consideration. Also attached are the names of allied organizations that support our decision to withdraw. We will pursue, in another venue, the development and implementation of a valid approach to agricultural sustainability.

Voting Members of the Leonardo Academy Sustainable Agriculture Committee:

Russell Williams, American Farm Bureau Federation
John T. Allan, American Frozen Food Institute
Ron Moore, American Soybean Association
Betsy Peterson, California Seed Association
John Thorne, CropLife America
Douglas B. Johnson, Environmental Intelligence, Inc.
Jeffrey Barach, Grocery Manufacturers Association
Ken McCauley, National Corn Growers Association
Bill M. Norman, National Cotton Council of America
Robert Guenther, United Fresh Produce Association

Allied Organizations:

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
Aqua Bounty Technologies
BASF
Bayer CropScience
Biotechnology Industry Organization
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers
California Association of Wheat Growers
California Bean Shippers Association
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Grain and Feed Association
California Pear Growers

Colorado Potato Administrative Committee Area II
California State Floral Association
California Warehouse Association
Corn Producers Association of Texas
Dow AgroSciences
Empire State Potato Growers
FMC Corporation
Gowan Company LLC
Idaho Potato Commission
Illinois Corn Growers Association
Indiana Corn Growers Association
Kansas Corn Growers Association
Kentucky Corn Growers Association
Maine Potato Board
Mid America CropLife Association
Minnesota Area II Potato Growers Research and Promotion Council
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Missouri Corn Growers Association
National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Potato Council
Nebraska Corn Growers Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
South Carolina Corn & Soybean Association
Southern Crop Production Association
Syngenta
The Fertilizer Institute
USA Rice Federation
Washington Association of Wine Grape Growers
Washington State Potato Commission
Western Plant Health Association

cc. S. Joe Bhatia, ANSI
Carol Kramer Le-Blanc, USDA
R. Charles Martin, USDA
Corey Wright, Dept. of Commerce
NIST