



Director, Standards and Education for Leading Harvest

OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN A LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY – GROWING A HEALTHIER FUTURE AND ADVANCING AGRICULTURE FROM THE GROUND UP

Leading Harvest, the industry leader driving innovation in sustainable agriculture, has introduced a new certification for sustainability across all crops and regions in the US and globally (Over 3 million farmland acres are already committed to the program). The organization is seeking to recruit for the newly created role of **Director, Standards and Education**, to manage the Leading Harvest suite of standards, ensure an equitable and high-integrity certification process, and provide a robust set of educational resources to support Leading Harvest certification for entities across the sustainable agriculture supply chain. This is a remote position with an expectation for 10 – 15% of the year traveling.

About Leading Harvest

Leading Harvest (www.leadingharvest.org) and its members are committed to increasing adoption of sustainability practices in agriculture. These practices are independently audited, scientifically rooted, and seamlessly integrated into production agriculture. It was formally organized in 2020 by and for stakeholders across the agricultural value chain—from farmland owners to companies and communities. After launching in the U.S., *Leading Harvest* started pilot programs across the globe with an initial focus in Australia and Canada.

A key driver for the organization’s formation was the overlapping demands of key stakeholders -- farmers, supply chains, retailers, farmland investors, environmental NGOs and communities. Stakeholder interest in sustainable, regenerative and climate-smart agriculture is growing rapidly with increasing attention to how agricultural systems affect and interact with the environment and society. *Leading Harvest* and its standards are a scalable, sector-wide response to the demand for sustainability assurance in agriculture that did not exist in a way that was responsive to the broad diversity of ecosystems, crops, regions, and agricultural management systems. [Articles: [Successful Farming](#) | [The Land Report](#) | [Global AgInvesting](#) | [FruitNet](#)]

The *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard* is designed to optimize sustainable farmland management as part of a comprehensive assurance program. The standard addresses 13 sustainability principles. A [comprehensive primer](#) outlines these principles in depth. When utilized, these standards provide a framework to help farmers and farm managers methodically tackle agricultural sustainability and make verifiable claims to the market while strengthening credibility, reputation, and social license of farmers and investors across the value chain. Over the last two years, the [Walton Family Foundation](#) has awarded two substantial grants to *Leading Harvest* to accelerate its sustainability certification through pilot programs, resource development and educational initiatives.

The organization is governed by a [Board of Directors](#) comprised of recognized leaders from the social, environmental, and economic sectors. With diverse viewpoints across the agricultural landscape, the Board reflects the multiple interests that make up the agriculture community from farmers to food retailers, environmental NGOs to labor organizations, investors to consumers. The policy work of the Board is supported by its *Resource Group* which consists of board appointees. The program also relies on the *Independent Review Panel*, comprised of industry experts and advisors, who are responsible for ongoing review of and reporting on the assurance programs established by the organization. This critical work includes oversight of a regular revision process of *Leading Harvest* standards as part of a continuous improvement framework.

Position Overview

Reporting to the President & CEO, the **Director, Standards and Education** will be the chief steward of the *Leading Harvest* certification program and suite of standards to all constituents across the food value chain, domestic and global.

Specific responsibilities include:

Manage all aspects of the *Leading Harvest* suite of standards in alignment with the organization’s core guiding principles and mission, including:

- Maintain the *Leading Harvest* standards and coordinate the technical process of the standards revision cycle
- Evaluate *Leading Harvest* standards against other national and international certification programs and regulatory requirements, document how *Leading Harvest* certification can support program users in demonstrating compliance with other programs, and identify opportunities to refine and strengthen the standards in the global marketplace
- Lead the development of standards for additional focus areas (e.g. chain of custody, pasture) as informed by the organization's strategic plan

Oversee the *Leading Harvest* certification program quality system, including:

- Define *Leading Harvest's* certification program quality objectives and ensure integration within all parts of the organization
- Develop and implement policies and procedures governing the approval and oversight of certification bodies for the *Leading Harvest* program
- Implement comprehensive certification program requirements and develop resources to ensure consistent application by all approved certification bodies
- Spearhead the evolution of the certification data management system to scale with the growth of the organization

Responsible for *Leading Harvest's* educational program, including:

- Collaborate with President & CEO and Director, Strategic Alliances and Programs, to define the strategic roadmap and priorities for the educational program
- Lead the development of guidance and educational materials for current and potential program users across the food-ag value chain, including growers, associations, manufacturers and brand owners, to support their conformance with *Leading Harvest* program requirements
- Ensure timely communication to certification bodies and program users regarding changes to certification program requirements

Candidate Profile

The **Director, Standards and Education** will have an innovative mindset with a strong understanding of certification program and standards management. He/she will excel at communicating and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders and must be a brand ambassador for the organization's mission and have a passion for sustainability. The ideal candidate will have the following attributes:

Experience and Skills:

- BS/BA in agriculture, business, or related discipline.
- Minimum five (5) years experience with certification and/or standards programs in agriculture, fishery, conservation, forestry, or habitat; experience with ISO 17021 and/or ISO 17065 based programs preferred
- Experience implementing and maintaining a documented quality system a plus
- Working knowledge in the agriculture sector and a deep understanding of the nuances and complexities in the industry
- Successful track record in cultivating strategic relationships and alliances; history of working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders.
- Ability to read, analyze and interpret complex problems before applying scientific thinking to solve them; ability to articulate concepts and technical language to a variety of audiences
- Experience writing technical reports and presenting to executives and thought leaders in the sustainability space; ability to work collaboratively to create educational materials that are niche-specific for program users

Personal Characteristics:

- Self-starter with strong executive function who thrives in an environment that requires effective prioritization of projects. Demonstrates ability to manage time efficiently to meet deadlines while using creativity in finding solutions. Highly adaptive and willing to navigate ambiguity

- Genuine thought leader in the space who is adept in discerning alternatives to conventional thinking; actively challenges and influences audiences
- Exceptional oral and written communicator, with an adaptable ability to engage in all forums (local farm level, corporate level, at public meetings, etc.) in a constructive manner
- Excellent emotional intelligence competencies, including relationship management. Must retain situational awareness while tracking initiatives related to sustainability both domestic and globally
- Insightful and consultive, providing practical and pragmatic solutions that are actionable

For confidential consideration as a candidate or to suggest a prospective candidate, please email info@leadingharvest.org.