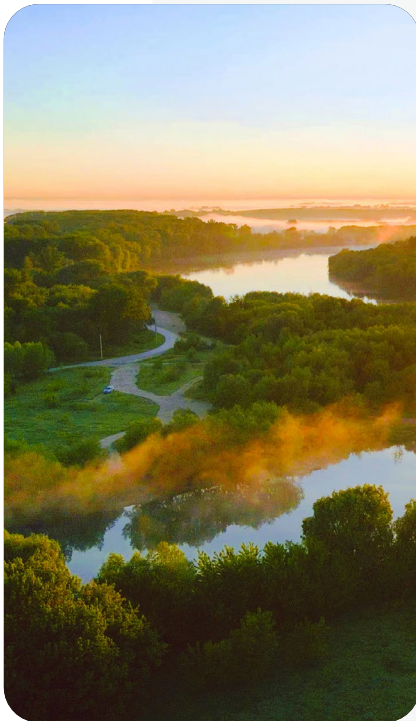




LWG YEAR IN REVIEW 2025

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
LWG in numbers.....	4
Sustainability	5
Public consultations.....	6
Highlights from 2025.....	7
2025 in events.....	8
What's next for LWG?	9
Upcoming events	10

INTRODUCTION FROM VANESSA PODMORE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHAPING THE NEXT ERA OF
LEATHER WORKING GROUP

As 2025 draws to a close, it feels like an important moment to pause and reflect. It's been a landmark year for Leather Working Group – one defined by growth, collaboration, and a renewed sense of purpose.

When we first stepped out on our own, we knew that independence would bring both opportunity and responsibility. This year, we've embraced both. We've expanded our reach, strengthened our systems, and continued to shape what the next era of LWG will look like.

One of the most significant milestones has been the creation of LWG Assurance Services, a new independent assurance body. This development has been in the making for some time, and it represents a major step forward in strengthening trust, transparency, and credibility across our certification system. By separating assurance from standard-setting, we're ensuring

that our auditing processes are impartial, professional, and reliable – and that both certified suppliers and auditors are supported by a system they can truly depend upon.

At the same time, our standards development programme has gathered real momentum. We are now deep into the process of creating what will become the LWG Sustainability System, set to launch in 2026. This comprehensive framework will include an updated Leather Production Standard and a brand-new Chain of Custody Standard, designed to bring greater clarity and traceability across the leather supply chain.

The standards team, led by our new Director of Standards and Assurance, have been doing exceptional work – not only drafting and refining these new requirements, but also listening carefully through our public consultation process. The feedback we're receiving from tanneries, brands, auditors, and NGOs is invaluable, helping us build something that is robust, auditable, and truly reflective of the needs of our global community.

And our community continues to grow. Our expanding team means we now have access to more expertise and insight than ever before – a vital resource as we navigate a rapidly changing business and regulatory landscape. The challenges facing all industries today, and particularly those connected to natural materials, are complex.

But they also present opportunities: to innovate, to collaborate, and to demonstrate leadership grounded in evidence and integrity.

That's why you'll see LWG more present, more active, and more connected than ever. We're out there at events across the world, speaking with stakeholders face-to-face, and building partnerships that help ensure leather continues to have a voice in conversations about sustainable materials and responsible production.

Our purpose remains clear. Just as it was when LWG first began 20 years ago, our mission is to give the leather industry a credible, consistent, and science-based way to demonstrate best practice. Done well, our work not only strengthens the leather supply chain – it also helps position leather as a material that has a rightful place in a more sustainable and circular future.

We all share a responsibility to reduce our impact and to create better systems for the generations to come. At LWG, we'll continue to evolve our standards, our processes, and ourselves as an organisation to meet that challenge. Change is never easy, but it is always necessary – and together, we will continue to drive improvement across our industry, one step, one standard, and one collaboration at a time.

2025 numbers



138

new certified
suppliers



4

public
consultations



23

new
members



Where we are now

60+

countries
worldwide

600+

members

>30%

of global leather
production

2,316

total certified
suppliers

LWG IN NUMBERS

In 2025, LWG celebrated its 20th anniversary, and the people and collaborations that have brought us to this point, setting industry-leading sustainability standards and supporting leather makers to reach greater heights.

SUSTAINABILITY

As the sustainability landscape continues to advance – along with the leather industry itself – our standards evolve to meet the changing needs of our members and suppliers. Throughout 2025, our focus has been on launching a new standards framework: the **LWG Sustainability System**, comprising the **Leather Production Standard** and the **Chain of Custody Standard**.

Developed with input from experts across our global community – including brands, suppliers, leather technologists, auditors, and more – the LWG Sustainability System will provide a more comprehensive, future-ready framework designed to support continuous improvement across the leather supply chain.

Protocol 7

Leather Manufacturer
Standard

Leather Trader
Standard

Commissioning
Manufacturer Standard

Subcontractor
Standard

LWG Sustainability System

Leather Production
Standard

Chain of Custody
Standard

Site Carbon
Metric



PUBLIC CONSULTATION DATA

In 2025, we have undertaken four different public consultations on the new standards that will form the LWG Sustainability System.

THESE CONSULTATIONS CONCERNED OUR:

- 1** **Leather Production Standard** core environmental sections
- 2** **Chain of Custody Standard** – a separate standard focused on traceability and segregation
- 3** **Section 15 of the Leather Production Standard** – concerning due diligence for responsible sourcing
- 4** **Labour & Social Responsibility** – as part of the Leather Production standard

We're still collating data on the latter three consultations, and we look forward to sharing those insights and responses with you. For now, we're pleased to share some headline stats from the public consultation on the core environment sections of the Leather Production Standard that show just how much our stakeholders help shape these standards as they develop:

700+
downloads

20+
countries

400
unique responses

2,800
unique comments



PUBLIC CONSULTATION COMMENTS FOCUSED ON:

VOC emissions
Production data Workload
Water usage **Confidentiality**
Waste inventory Effluent treatment
H&S responsibility Energy consumption
Airborne pollutant exposure assessment
Environmental policy Subcontractors
Submitting CIL

CLAIMS GUIDANCE



In 2025, we launched our new Membership Claims Guidance, providing greater clarity for brands on how they can communicate their LWG membership and showcase their commitment to considered leather sourcing.

WHAT IS IT?

The membership claims guidance provides a clear focus on how brands should communicate their Leather Working Group membership to avoid confusion with product claims and build consumer trust.

It introduces:

- A new membership logo that's distinct from any product-related marks to communicate a brand's commitment to continuous improvement
- A stylised QR code for use on marketing materials and packaging that's linked to a mobile-optimised consumer landing page that

communicates the values of LWG membership and allows consumers to verify membership directly

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

This new approach clarifies the difference between being a Leather Working Group member and making sustainability claims about products.

It includes:

- A new membership logo, QR code, and consumer page to reduce the risk of misuse or misinterpretation
- Updated membership terms and conditions to include the new guidance



LWG ASSURANCE SERVICES

Another major development for 2025 was the launch of LWG Assurance Services (LWG AS), a new separate organisation which now independently manages certification to LWG standards.

LWG AS is a not-for-profit entity created to uphold the integrity of the LWG Standards through impartial and robust certification. This strategic shift is designed to reinforce trust, strengthen impartiality, and enhance the long-term credibility of the LWG assurance system.

By operating independently and without commercial pressures, LWG AS is free to focus solely on delivering certification services aligned to best auditing practices. The new organisation is led by leather industry veteran Jon Loxston, who has previously served as Director of Operations at Pittards and on the Leather Working Group Board (Technical Subgroup).

EVENTS

This was a year of key events for LWG and highlighted that it remains vitally important to meet face-to-face with long-time, new and prospective stakeholders and discuss how we can all work together to improve the sustainability of leather production and support this industry through an undeniably difficult time.

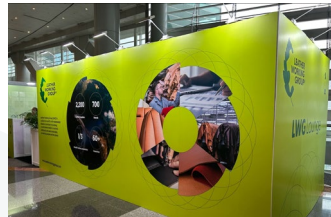
2025 Events

- APLF, Hong Kong
- Sustainable Leather Forum, Paris
- Lineapelle, Milan
- ISPO, Munich
- FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation
- Textile Exchange Conference



Alongside these industry events, members of our team also travelled to tanneries in Vietnam, China, Italy and India, gaining valuable, first-hand perspectives on how the LWG standards are being implemented in tanneries, and the differences and similarities for businesses around the world.

These in-person connections – from workshops and panel discussions to tannery floor visits – are at the heart of LWG's mission. They remind us that progress in sustainability comes from collaboration, shared understanding, and a continued commitment to engage with our stakeholders.



STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

2026 will mark a major milestone for Leather Working Group with the launch of the LWG Sustainability System – our revised and enhanced framework of standards that will replace Protocol 7.

This new system brings together two key components: the Leather Production Standard and the Chain of Custody Standard, creating a comprehensive approach to measuring and improving environmental and social performance across the leather supply chain.

The LWG Sustainability System has been shaped by the exceptional expertise of our Standards team, led by Victoria Snelling, Director of Standards and Assurance, whose leadership has guided the creation of a credible, transparent, and future-focused framework.

Continuous improvement underpins everything we do, but these new standards are about more than simply advancing requirements. They are designed to ensure relevance and applicability across diverse global and operational contexts, so that every site – regardless of scale or geography – can credibly and appropriately engage in its sustainability journey.

The system also introduces greater efficiency and alignment:

- A streamlined audit process through increased digitisation, reducing administrative burden and improving accuracy.
- Reduced audit fatigue, with standards structured to better equip tanneries to meet brand expectations through LWG certification, minimising the need for duplicated reporting.

To support adoption, the new standards will be accompanied by detailed guidance materials and training resources thanks to the work of Technical Training Manager Mark Gummer, enabling tanneries to connect directly with LWG. This training is designed to deepen understanding of the LWG standards, build capacity, and drive real, on-the-ground improvements that go far beyond the audit itself.

The launch of the LWG Sustainability System represents not only an evolution of our standards, but also a reaffirmation of LWG's commitment to continuous improvement – supporting our members and certified suppliers in driving meaningful progress toward a more sustainable leather industry.

PILOT STUDIES

Before launching the new standards, LWG will carry out pilot testing in a selection of tanneries to ensure that the LWG Sustainability System is fully ready for implementation. This vital stage helps confirm that the proposed requirements are practical, scalable, and trusted across the leather industry.

Covering the Leather Production Standard, Chain of Custody Standard, Due Diligence, and selected social requirements, on-site pilot audits will take place across 15–20 sites on a rolling basis. Each audit will include at least two members of the Leather Working Group team, alongside an auditor and, where appropriate, representatives from LWG Assurance Services.

Following the pilot phase, the new LWG Standards are expected to be published in the first half of 2026.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR LWG?

EVENTS

In 2026, Leather Working Group plans to take part in more events than ever before, not only continuing to connect with the leather industry at its key trade shows but also reaching out to new audiences in sectors such as aviation and outdoor, to advance the understanding of leather manufacturing.

By engaging directly with these leather-using industries, we aim to build new collaborations and strengthen our growing network of stakeholders; the backbone of our mission to advance sustainability and responsibility in leather production and sourcing worldwide.

In 2026, you can find us at:



And more to be announced soon!





THANK YOU

Thank you for being part of our story so far. Together, we've undertaken important work to advance responsible leather production and sourcing.

As we move into 2026, we look forward to building on this momentum – setting higher goals, forging new partnerships, and continuing to make a positive impact across the industry.

Leather Working Group

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