



## **Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund**

Annual Management Report of Fund Performance

December 31, 2014

The Fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure, can be obtained at your request, and at no cost, by calling us at 1-866-998-8298; by writing to us at Harvest Portfolios Group, 710 Dorval Drive, Suite 209, Oakville, Ontario, L6K 3V7; by visiting our website at [www.harvestportfolios.com](http://www.harvestportfolios.com); or on SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).

# **Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund**

## **CORPORATE OVERVIEW**

Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. (“Harvest”) is a Canadian Investment Manager focused on unique income generating investment products. Harvest was founded in 2009 and is focused on developing investment products that follow three investment criteria:

1. Clear investment objectives
2. Transparency
3. Income generation

Harvest endeavours to develop investment products that are clear in their mandate and easy for our investors to understand. We strive to be transparent, so that our investors can open their financial reports and know exactly what they own. Our funds are also invested to provide investors with consistent monthly or quarterly income; therefore, we seek to invest our fund portfolios in well managed companies that have a history of steady cash flow and pay dividends.

## **INVESTMENT PRODUCT**

The Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund (the “Fund”) invests in an equally-weighted underlying portfolio of twenty of the world’s top one hundred rated brand companies, each with a market capitalization of at least US\$10 billion. As the US and global economy generally expands, Harvest believes that a diversified portfolio invested in blue chip companies will provide investors with an attractive yield and strong capital appreciation potential.

# Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund

Unitholder letter March 2015

Dear Valued Unitholder,

In 1985 I started my career in the investment business as an advisor; two years later in 1987 the markets suffered their worst one day loss since 1929. That was a difficult time for all investors but there were many lessons to be learned over the next several years. I learned that investments in products that are transparent and businesses that I understood could result in long term gains despite market volatility.

As a unitholder of Harvest it is important to understand our philosophy. The three guiding principles we use when developing our products are:

**Keep it Simple:** A complex product does not mean it is a better product. We want investors to understand exactly what they are investing in and are comfortable that it meets their objectives.

**Transparent:** A portfolio should reflect what an investor thought they were buying. Investors can check their statements and our website to verify and most importantly to “know what you own”.

**Consistent Income:** All of our funds provide consistent monthly or quarterly income. We want to provide income from diverse sources.

We are in a period of low interest rates and whether one feels they are being held there artificially or due to deflationary pressures, it is our opinion that this will continue for the foreseeable future. Investors who are in or approaching retirement, or simply want a structure that pays income, should have comfort that Harvest is focused on that feature and will endeavour to ensure all of our products meet their income and investment objectives.

During my 30 years in the business, I have never seen the volatility and technological influences that move markets like we see today and it is likely here to stay. Regardless, these factors don't change the basics of fundamental investing and Harvest's focus on products that meet your needs. Our goal is to establish products invested in good quality companies that can provide solid returns over the long term.

As we look forward, we want to assure our investors that Harvest will remain committed to its philosophy and appreciate the confidence you have placed in us by investing with us.

Sincerely,

*Signed “Michael Kovacs”*

Michael Kovacs  
President and Chief Executive Officer



## **Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund**

### **MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE**

The management report of fund performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Fund. For your reference, the annual financial statements of the Fund are attached to the management report of fund performance. You may obtain additional copies of these documents at your request, and at no cost, by calling toll free at 1(866) 998-8298; by writing to us at Harvest Portfolios Group Inc., 710 Dorval Drive, Suite 209, Oakville, Ontario, L6K 3V7; or by visiting our website at [www.harvestportfolios.com](http://www.harvestportfolios.com); or on SEDAR at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).

Unitholders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the Fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

#### **INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY**

The Fund's investment objectives are to provide Unitholders with:

- (i) monthly cash distributions;
- (ii) the opportunity for capital appreciation; and
- (iii) lower overall volatility of Portfolio returns than would otherwise be experienced by owning Equity Securities of the Brand Leaders directly.

The Fund's manager, Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. ("Harvest") has retained Highstreet Asset Management Inc. ("Highstreet" or "Investment Manager") to provide investment management services to the Fund.

To achieve its investment objectives, the Fund will invest in an equally-weighted portfolio of Equity Securities of 20 Brand Leaders from the Brand Leaders Investable Universe that have a market capitalization of at least US\$10 billion at the time of investment and meet the investment characteristics described below. In order to seek to generate additional returns, Highstreet will sell call options on no more than 33% of the Equity Securities of each Brand Leader held in the Fund.

Highstreet will select the Fund's initial equity securities and will quarterly reconstitute and rebalance the Portfolio such that, at the time of the initial investment and immediately following each quarterly reconstitution and rebalancing, the Portfolio will have the following investment characteristics:

- Value** – An average Price-to-Earnings ratio lower than the average for the Brand Leaders Investable Universe;
- Yield** – An average Yield greater than the average for the Brand Leaders Investable Universe; and
- Quality** – An average 5-year Return on Equity growth greater than the average for the Brand Leaders Investable Universe.

#### **RISK**

The risks associated with investing in the Fund are as described in the prospectus. There were no material changes to the Fund over the period that affected the overall level of risk of the Fund.

#### **RESULTS OF OPERATIONS**

The Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund commenced operations following the closing of its initial public offering on July 24, 2014 of 4,467,950 Series A units at \$10.00 per unit for gross proceeds of \$44,679,500 and 332,050 Series U units at \$10.00 USD per unit for gross proceeds of \$3,320,500 USD. On August 12, 2014, an overallotment option was exercised for an additional 215,000 Series A units at a price of \$10.00 per unit for gross proceeds of \$2,150,000. Performance information is not available for periods less than one year.

## **Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund**

Strong economic data in the United States during the period led to continued positive performance for the broader US equity markets during 2014. Economic data in other regions around the world was not uniform however and resulted in diverging economic data and equity market performance. This is evident in Europe where the broader equity markets underperformed those in the United States. In general, the initial allocation towards US listed equities with the parent company domiciled in Europe were a drag on the Funds short performance history as European equities in general under-performed since the inception of the Fund. Other relative performance compared with broader markets can be attributed to individual stock performance with several strong outperformers while several others lagged the broader market.

One Brand Leader was replaced during the period. The Fund was invested in 20 Brand Leaders during the period and sold call options on the underlying holdings during the period in order to meet its investment and income objectives.

### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

The Fund entered into a normal course issuer bid program for the period from August 18, 2014 to August 17, 2015, which allows the Fund to purchase up to 468,095 Series A units of the Fund for cancellation by way of a normal course issuer bid through the facilities of the Toronto Stock Exchange. During the period ended December 31, 2014 117,800 units were purchased for cancellation for \$1,059,033.

### **RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**

There were no related party transactions during the reporting period, except for management fees and other expense reimbursements paid to Harvest, as noted below in Management and Other Fees.

### **MANAGEMENT AND OTHER FEES**

The Fund pays its manager, Harvest, a management fee calculated based on the average weekly net asset value (“NAV”) and paid monthly in arrears, based on an annual rate of 0.75%, plus applicable taxes, of the NAV of the Fund. The Manager pays Highstreet, a fee for its portfolio advisory service, from the management fee received from the Fund, calculated on the basis of the Fund’s NAV.

At its sole discretion, the Manager may waive management fees or absorb expenses of the Fund. During the year there were no fees waived or absorbed. The management expense ratios of the Fund with and without the waivers and absorptions are reported in the Ratios and Supplemental Data table below.

#### **Operating expenses**

The Fund is responsible for operating expenses relating to the carrying on of its business, including custodial services, interest, taxes, legal, audit fees, transfer agency services relating to the issue and redemption of units, and the cost of financial and other reports, costs and expenses for the Fund’s Independent Review Committee (“IRC”), including fees and expenses of the IRC members and compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies. The Manager pays for such expenses on behalf of the Fund, except for certain expenses such as interest, and is then reimbursed by the Fund.

#### **Other expenses**

The Manager will be reimbursed by the Fund for all reasonable costs, expenses and liabilities incurred by the Manager for performance of services on behalf of the Fund in connection with the discharge by the Manager of its duties hereunder. Such costs and expenses may include, without limitation: mailing and printing expenses for reports to unitholders and other unitholder communications; a reasonable allocation of salaries, benefits and consulting fees; independent directors of the Manager and other administrative expenses and costs incurred in connection with the Fund’s continuous public offering and other obligations. These expenses were \$69,835 for the period ended December 31, 2014 and are included in the unitholder reporting costs on the Statements of Comprehensive Income in the annual financial statements.

During the Fund’s initial offering, certain offering expenses such as costs of creating the Fund, the cost of printing and preparing the prospectus, legal expenses of the Fund and other out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the agents together with the agent’s fees payable by the Fund are included in the carrying amount of the Fund’s obligation for net assets attributable to holders of redeemable units.

## Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund

### RECOMMENDATIONS OR REPORTS BY THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Independent Review Committee tabled no special reports and made no extraordinary material recommendations to management of the Fund during the period ended December 31, 2014.

### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The following tables present selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the past period. This information is derived from the Fund's annual financial statements at December 31, 2014.

#### Series A

<b>THE FUND'S NET ASSETS PER UNIT</b>		<b>2014</b>
Net assets - beginning of the period <sup>2</sup>		\$ 9.33
<b>Increase (decrease) from operations</b>		
Total revenue		0.11
Total expenses		(0.07)
Realized gains (losses) for the period		(0.56)
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period		0.55
<b>Total increase (decrease) from operations<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$ 0.03</b>
<b>Distributions<sup>3</sup></b>		
Return of capital		(0.27)
<b>Total annual distributions<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>\$ (0.27)</b>
<b>Net assets - end of the period<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$ 9.09</b>

<b>RATIOS AND SUPPLEMENTAL DATA</b>		<b>2014</b>
<b>Total net asset value</b>		<b>\$ 41,584,318</b>
Number of units outstanding		4,572,949
Management expense ratio <sup>4</sup>		9.41%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions <sup>4</sup>		9.41%
Trading expense ratio <sup>5</sup>		0.23%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>6</sup>		17.97%
<b>Net asset value per unit</b>		<b>\$ 9.09</b>
<b>Closing market price (HBF.UN)</b>		<b>\$ 8.73</b>



## Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund

### Series U (CAD)

<b>THE FUND'S NET ASSETS PER UNIT</b>		<b>2014</b>
<b>Net assets - beginning of the period<sup>2</sup></b>		\$ 10.02
<b>Increase (decrease) from operations</b>		
Total revenue		0.13
Total expenses		(0.08)
Realized gains (losses) for the period		0.10
Unrealized gains (losses) for the period		0.61
<b>Total increase (decrease) from operations<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$ 0.76</b>
<b>Distributions<sup>3</sup></b>		
Return of capital		(0.27)
<b>Total annual distributions<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>\$ (0.27)</b>
<b>Net assets - end of the period<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>\$ 10.48</b>

<b>RATIOS AND SUPPLEMENTAL DATA</b>		<b>2014</b>
<b>Total net asset value</b>		\$ 3,391,226
Number of units outstanding		323,550
Management expense ratio <sup>4</sup>		9.15%
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions <sup>4</sup>		9.15%
Trading expense ratio <sup>5</sup>		0.23%
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>6</sup>		17.97%
<b>Net asset value per unit</b>		<b>\$ 10.48</b>

#### Explanatory Notes:

1. Net assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase (decrease) from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the reporting period. It is not intended that the Fund's net assets per unit table act as a continuity of opening and closing net assets per unit.
2. Net assets, at the commencement of operations on July 24, 2014 was \$9.33, net of agents' commissions and issuance costs of \$0.67 per unit for Series A and net assets, at the beginning of the period was \$10.02 (\$9.33 USD), net of agents' commissions and issuance costs of \$0.73 (\$0.67 USD) per unit for Series U.
3. Distributions were paid in cash.
4. Management expense ratio ("MER") is based on total expenses (excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) of the stated period and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period. The MER for 2014 (the year of inception) the year of inception, included agents' fees of \$2,458,549 and issue costs of \$702,443 for Series A and agents' fees of \$187,340 and issue costs of \$53,526 for Series U, which were treated as a one-time expenses and therefore were not annualized. The MER without these cost is 1.85% for both Series A and Series U.
5. The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period.
6. The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the period. The higher a Fund's portfolio turnover rate, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a Fund.

#### YEAR-BY-YEAR RETURNS

National Instrument 81-106, the regulatory guideline for Continuous Disclosure, does not permit reporting of performance for any investment fund that has been in existence less than one year.

## **Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund**

### **SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO**

The Portfolio by Sector chart below provides a portfolio breakdown based on the total transactional net asset value of the Fund's portfolio holdings. A detailed breakdown of the Fund's holdings is available in the "Schedule of Investments" section of the Fund's annual financial statements.

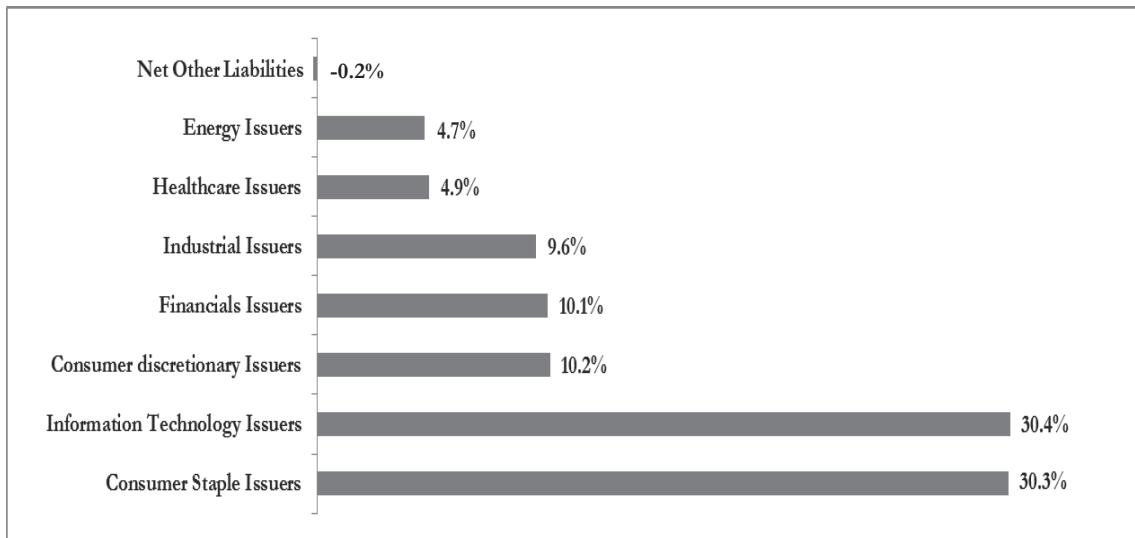
<b>Top Holdings</b>	<b>% of Net Asset Value</b>
Accenture PLC Cl. A	5.5
JPMorgan Chase & Co.	5.2
Anheuser-Busch InBev NV ADR	5.1
Ford Motor Company	5.1
Cisco Systems, Inc.	5.1
The Coca-Cola Company	5.1
McDonald's Corporation	5.1
Apple Inc.	5.1
Kimberly-Clark Corporation	5.1
PepsiCo, Inc.	5.0
Kellogg Co.	5.0
Deere & Company	5.0
Diageo PLC ADR	5.0
Intel Corporation	4.9
Johnson & Johnson	4.9
International Business Machines Corporation	4.9
Microsoft Corporation	4.9
Banco Santander Central Hispano SA ADR	4.9
Royal Dutch Shell PLC Cl. A ADR	4.7
Caterpillar Inc.	4.6
Net other liabilities	(0.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>

This summary of investment portfolio may change due to the ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund. Quarterly updates of the Fund's investment portfolio are available from Harvest Portfolios Group Inc. at [www.harvestportfolios.com](http://www.harvestportfolios.com).

## Brand Leaders Plus Income Fund

### SECTOR ALLOCATION

Total Net Asset Value (100.0%)



**Head Office**

710 Dorval Drive, Suite 209  
Oakville, ON L6K 3V7  
Phone Number: 416.649.4541  
Toll Free: 866.998.8298  
Fax Number: 416.649.4542  
Email: [info@harvestportfolios.com](mailto:info@harvestportfolios.com)

**CAUTION REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS**

This document may contain forward-looking statements relating to anticipated future events, results, circumstances, performance or expectations that are not historical facts but instead represent our beliefs regarding future events. By their nature, forward-looking statements require us to make assumptions and are subject to inherent risks and uncertainties. There is significant risk that predictions and other forward-looking statements will not prove to be accurate. We caution readers of this document not to place undue reliance on our forward-looking statements as a number of factors could cause actual future results, conditions, actions or events to differ materially from the targets, expectations, estimates or intentions expressed or implied in the forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from management expectations as projected in such forward-looking statements for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to market and general economic conditions, interest rates, regulatory and statutory developments, the effects of competition in the geographic and business areas in which the Fund may invest and the risks detailed from time to time in the Fund's simplified prospectus or offering memorandum. We caution that the foregoing list of factors is not exhaustive and that when relying on forward-looking statements to make decisions with respect to investing in the Fund, investors and others should carefully consider these factors, as well as other uncertainties and potential events, and the inherent uncertainty of forward-looking statements. Due to the potential impact of these factors, the Fund does not undertake, and specifically disclaims, any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, unless required by applicable law.