

The Dutch project “Bee Deals” from the Centre for Agriculture & Environment wins the 2015 European Bee Award

The runner-up prize goes to the “Czech Bumblebee project” run by Agricultural Research Ltd.

21 October 2015

Standing from 23 applications, the project “Bee Deals” from the Centre for Agriculture and Environment (CLM) in the Netherlands has emerged as the winner of the 2015 European Bee Award edition. A particularly innovative approach, involving relevant actors (farmers, municipalities, retailers) along the food chain that commit to promoting bee-friendly practices in their daily activities. We have spoken with the coordinator Jenneke van Vliet, to learn more about the goals and roll-out of the project.



The CLM’s ‘Bee Deals’ project is focused on putting in place good practices in order to protect pollinators. How did you come up with this idea?

There is a fierce scientific and public debate going on about the decline of honey bee and wild bee populations, in which controversy reigns on ‘the’ major threat to these beneficial insects. We wanted to show that there are ways out: we can all do our bit to help the bees! We promote action amongst the food supply chain as pollinators are crucial for pollination and thus food production. But we also involve important ‘neighbours’ of our farmers: provinces, waterboards and municipalities that own land which they can manage in a bee-friendly way.

‘Bee Deals’ is addressing 3 major threats to bees: lack of food, lack of shelter and use of harmful insecticides. What are the main objectives of the project and what are the main practices promoted to achieve the set goals?

Bee Deals aims to raise more awareness and knowledge about how to implement good bee practices by introducing Bee Deals. Bee Deals takes an innovative approach in which key actors in value chains commit themselves to implement good bee practices in their

own operational activities. Good bee practices may consist of sowing flowers or flowering green manure and establishing bee-corridors for example with flowering wind barriers in orchards, selection of bee-friendly plant protection methods and means and better practice in applying pesticides. By drafting and signing a Bee Deal for a number of key actors within a chain, the effects of

the implemented practises will be larger and the mutual commitment to implement and maintain good bee practises will be strengthened.

Among the practices that ‘Bee Deals’ promotes, the techniques to reduce spray drift were mentioned. What role did agricultural machinery play in developing ‘Bee Deals’ project?

We promote the most efficient spraying machinery amongst farmers and their contractors: Wingssprayer, air supported sprayers, lowered boom height. And raise awareness on how speed, pressure and right nozzle choice influence the effectiveness of crop protection AND water quality and bee health.

‘Bee deals’ involves public and private partners. What are the benefits of partnering with both of these sectors?

Public partners feel the responsibility towards biodiversity protection (often because their constituents demand so from them), but they do not always have the legislative or financial power to influence the farmers’ or

The European Bee Award

The European Bee Award was launched for the first time in 2014 by the **European Landowners’ Organization** and the **European Agricultural Machinery Association CEMA** with the aim of contributing to the promotion of common solutions for the benefit of biodiversity. The European Bee Award rewards farmers, landowners, land managers or rural entrepreneurs who contribute with an outstanding and innovative project to the protection of bees and other pollinators in the farmed environment.

Save the Date!

The **2015 European Bee Award Ceremony** and cocktail reception will be hosted by Franc Bogovič MEP, member of the 2015 European Bee Award jury and will take place

On: Wednesday, 9th December 2015

From: 18.00 onwards

At: Press Club Brussels Europe, rue Froissart 95 – 1000 Brussels



consumers' practices. Farmers are careful to accommodate new market demands, like bee-friendly production. And consumers have an increasing interest in the origin of their food and are thus more receptive for information on biodiversity along with the products on the supermarket shelves.

How many partners are involved so far? Based on your current experience, are you planning to sign 'Bee Deals' with other partners in the near future? Maybe exporting your idea to other countries?

Yes, in the Netherlands more 'Bee Deals' will be signed in the upcoming months for example between the municipality of Oss, the water board Aa en Maas and dairy farmers who will sow clover in their meadows and manage municipal verges so that these become more flowery. A project proposal by Amigos de las Abejas & CLM to start 'ApiAcuerdos' is currently waiting for approval for funding from the Fundación Biodiversidad. Also German counterparts have demonstrated interest.

The project is running from 2013 till 2016. We are halfway through the project's development. Could you tell us some of the main benefits for bees' populations you have observed until now? What are your expectations for the future?

The first years have been spent on 'sowing', now is 'harvesting' time: this summer we observed a lot of bees visiting the flower strips. Next spring we will instruct farmers and volunteers in how to recognize wild bee species, so that they themselves can monitor the effect of their efforts. We do not intend to start a full quantitative monitoring into bee populations as this is very costly. But the practices that we promote have already proven their effectiveness.

Which tools did you use to promote 'Bee Deals' at the local level? How did you engage with the local communities?

We produced information tool cards for the involved parties and general public on bee friendly measures they can take. Jumbo supermarkets spread the word on Bee Deals to 700.000 consumers in their monthly magazine.

How did you hear about the European Bee Award? Came along on the internet.

Is it the first time you have participated in a pan-European Initiative to promote your project?

Yes.

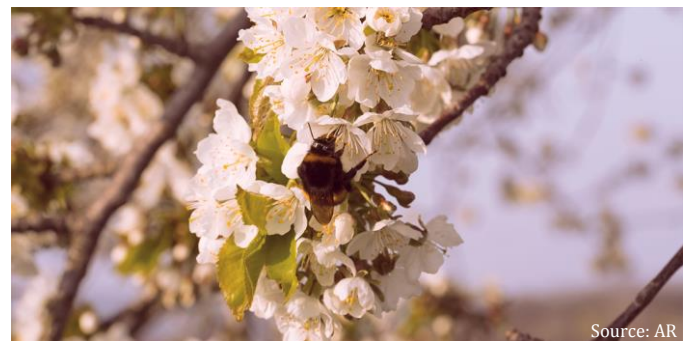
Have you already thought about the use you will give to your prize money?

Currently under debate!

Český čmelák

The **second prize** has been awarded to the project "**Czech Bumblebee**" from Agricultural Research Ltd., a successful project in the Czech Republic that consists on the repopulation of local bumblebees. The nested bumblebees are identical to the wild native populations (*bombus terrestris*) and are sold to farmers and any interested people in the community to foster crop pollination while **supporting local biodiversity**.

On one hand, the **project fights against the super hybrid pollinators** used for commercial pollination of crops at the beginning of the XX century. On the other hand **it raises awareness on the importance of pollinators** in local landscapes and communities. The laboratory and farm where the nests are reared, are open to the public and receive more than a thousand visitors every year.



To learn more about the European Bee Award, visit:

www.elo.org/awards/bee-award

www.cema-agri.org/page/european-bee-award