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# A guide to pollinator-friendly farming

Thriving wild pollinator populations are essential for healthy, resilient farmland ecosystems. They provide vital pollination services - three out of four of Europe's crops and four out of five wild plants rely on pollinating insects. It has been estimated that insect pollination is worth nearly €15 billion per year in Europe. Numerous scientific studies indicate that populations of wild pollinators (such as bees, hoverflies, moths, and butterflies) have declined dramatically across Europe in recent decades.

## Who does this guidance address?

**Farmers and other land managers** are key to making farmland across Europe a more hospitable place for wild pollinators, as well as benefiting from improved pollination services.

**Farm advisers and extension services** can integrate pollinator awareness and what actions help them in channels of advice and information serving farmers and other land managers and encourage collaborative landscape scale action.

**Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) managing authorities** can integrate objectives, measures and support for pollinators into the design and delivery of the Common Agricultural Policy and state-aid support for farming.

## Key recommendations for farmers and other land managers

Step 1) find out what wild pollinators need in terms of food, hibernating and nesting sites, how these differ from the needs of honeybees and how your day-to-day farming decisions can affect them – ask your advisor or an environmental group (see resources section)

Step 2) look for local advice on wild pollinators – publications, online resources, and advisory services, and find out if there are any pollinator groups involving farmers and other land managers near you

Step 3) assess how pollinator-friendly your farm already is, looking at key pollinator habitats and features and how you manage these; also consider where the pollinator-friendly habitats are located in relation to each other and to insect-pollinated crops

Step 4) prepare a list of possible actions you could take to help pollinators, from simple changes in field work (reducing pesticide use, changing mowing regimes) through changing how you manage existing habitats and features (buffer strips, hedges, field corners) to creating new food sources, nesting areas or places to hibernate

Step 5) make a 5-year plan to improve your pollinator habitats and resources, thinking carefully about where you locate new features as well as how you create and manage them to maximise the benefits for both the pollinators and your crops

Step 6) make effective use of any funding available in your region to implement your plan, especially environmental land management payments and environmental investments through the CAP and other EU funding possibilities<sup>1</sup>, regional and national funding

Step 7) explain to your family (especially your children), neighbouring farmers and your farmers' association what you are doing for wild pollinators

Step 8) consider setting up a local pollinator group (there may be government or other sources of support for this)

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FARM ADVISORS AND EXTENSION SERVICES AND PRIVATE ADVISERS

- ▶ **promote the benefits of pollinators – both for crop production and for a good public image – and the compatibility of pollinator friendly farming with profitability**
- ▶ **find out how wild pollinators can contribute to crop production in your area; gather evidence-based information on the needs of wild pollinators in terms of food, hibernating and nesting sites, how these differ from the needs of honeybees, and how land use and land management decisions affect pollinators; look for local advice on wild pollinators management – publications, online resources and advisory materials, and if there are any local pollinator groups**
- ▶ **integrate pollinator awareness and 'pollinator-friendly' advice within established channels of advice and information serving farmers and other land managers (newsletters, material aimed at specific farming systems, farmers' groups, advisory publications, on-farm advice)**
- ▶ **develop detailed, specific pollinator planning advice for the key farming systems in your area, with the assistance of environmental experts (e.g. in bee and butterfly conservation groups, in government research establishments and universities); include information on how farmers can make best use of agriculture programme choices and funding (with advisory support for applying for funding)**
- ▶ **promote management systems and techniques that are of general benefit to wild pollinators – for example integrated pest management and agroecological approaches, including organic farming**
- ▶ **join a local pollinator group or if none exists, set one up (there may be sources of government support for this e.g. an agricultural European Innovation Partnership Operational Group)**
- ▶ **champion and publicise good practice for pollinator management in your area, through local 'lead' farmers, schools, and others with influence in the local community.**

More detailed guidance is provided in **“A Guide to Pollinator Friendly Farming”**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, by joining local innovation farmer groups under the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) or conservation projects under the LIFE Programme

<sup>2</sup> A Guide to Pollinator-friendly farming. doi:10.2779/401527. At: <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/EUPKH/Farmers>

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP) MANAGING AUTHORITIES

- ▶ **With technical advice and support from pollinator experts, identify the type and context of agricultural and forest land management (changes) needed to:**
  - protect existing wild pollinator populations, and secure good conservation status of pollinator species)
  - increase the diversity and abundance of wild pollinator species, identifying any sectoral or regional differences
  - reduce the use and impact of pesticides on pollinators considering regional and local situations and contexts
- ▶ **In preparing the CAP Strategic Plan, prioritise these needs as part of the biodiversity objective. The CAP strategic plan should explain, based on the SWOT and the needs assessment, how the measures and interventions will lead to an improvement of the situation of pollinators.**
- ▶ **Plan to address pollinator needs as a coherent series of steps running through all decision-making stages of preparing and implementing the CAP Strategic Plan:**
  - defining eligibility for CAP support
  - setting conditionality standards choosing interventions
  - designing of detailed measures, (for example through tailored packages of measures, results-based payments, landscape-scale contracts with groups of land managers)
  - provision of farm advice and support for innovative approaches to improving management for wild pollinators.

More detailed guidance is provided in **“A Guide to Pollinator Friendly Farming”**<sup>3</sup>

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