



European Bee Award

The goal of this prestigious prize is to promote projects contributing to the protection and preservation of bees and other pollinators in Europe's farmed landscape.

The ELO, the European Landowners' Organization, with the support of CEMA, the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association have been running this award since 2014.

With two main prize categories, one focusing on "Land management practices" and a second one looking at "innovative technological solutions reducing farming operations' impact on pollinators", the European Bee Award has become an unmissable yearly gathering to acknowledge the efforts pulled by Europeans to protect bees and pollinators in Europe and beyond.

The winners of the 2019 edition explained to us a bit more in detail about their initiatives and what are their plans for the future.

Pro Planet Apples from Lake Constance Winner of the "Land Management Practices"

"In our PRO-PLANET apple project, the local bring the abstract idea of promoting pollinators to reality on the fields. Engaging with local actors means using local experience and know-how and this was and still is very valuable for our project. Besides, strong dissemination efforts have inspired other farmers and stakeholders such as municipalities, schools, companies or NGOs."

Q. European Bee Award : The 'PRO-PLANET Apples from Lake Constance' it is a very consolidated initiative having results in protecting pollinators and increasing biodiversity. How are you taking this successful initiative further? Any plans for the future?

A. PRO PLANET - Communication: A core task for the future is to make the added value of the PRO PLANET apples more visible and better understandable to consumers. A better communication will support the consumers' willingness to pay a higher price.

Inspiration: We want to intensify the know-how exchange with other PRO PLANET regions. Since 2012 the project has been transferred to twelve other regions in Germany and Austria. We want to learn more from each other.

Innovation: Some scientific projects are testing new special measures to promote pollinating insects in orchards. We will try to introduce effective measures to our farmers.

Q. EBA - You work in partnership, Rewe Group, Constance lake foundation and Obst vom Bodensee Vertriebsgesellschaft mbH could you mention three positive aspects of engaging with local actors?

A. PP - Engaging with local actors makes your ideas and projects real. In our PRO PLANET apple project, the local farmers bring the abstract idea of promoting pollinators to reality on the fields. Engaging with local actors means using local experience and know-how. This was and still is very valuable for our project to achieve best possible implementation of measures.

Another positive aspect is the strong dissemination of project results by local networking. Other farmers but also stakeholders like municipalities, schools, companies or NGOs have been inspired by our PRO PLANET project and have increased their efforts for biodiversity.

Q. EBA - Seeing is believing, do you think farmers got further involved when seeing the benefits in neighbours fruit production?

A. PP - It is not a question of believing. It is a question of money. Most of the farmers would like to do more for biodiversity and environment. To promote a more sustainable agriculture, farmers need better financial incentives - by public money and by prices that are fair for environment and farmers

Q. EBA - Do you share your good practices with other regions in Germany or in Europe?

A. PP - Since 2012, REWE Group, NABU and Birdlife Austria have transferred the Lake Constance project to 12 other apple producing regions in Germany and Austria. There is also a close exchange between the PRO PLANET apple regions and the PRO PLANET vegetable regions. Lake Constance Foundation also promotes the project via the EU-LIFE project "Biodiversity in Standards and Labels for the Food Industry".

Q. EBA - How did you hear about the European Bee Award? Would the prize help to support your initiatives?

A. PP - We became aware by several newsletters. First of all the prize is a high-level recognition for all the apple farmers and technical consultancies joining and supporting the project for so many years. We hope that the European Bee Award will raise the awareness for our project and its main success factors: close collaboration between food business, farmers and environmental NGO; long-term character; voluntary implementation and biodiversity monitoring. Winning an award is always an honor but it is also a commitment to continue ambitiously and to pursue the chosen path with high dedication.

Check all details on www.proplanet-label.com

BEE VARROA SCANNER - APISFERO

Winner of the category 2 "Application of Innovative Technological Solutions"

Varroa is known to be the main enemy of honey bees. Counting is fundamental in order to reduce treatments, so as not to damage the honey bees and to avoid the development of resistance to varroacide. The BeeVS allows the Varroa to be counted easily and precisely, reducing the treatments.

Organized by :



The ELO, European Landowners' Organization is a unique federation of 60 national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond, which represent the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit, the ELO stands for all rural entrepreneurs, promoting a prosperous countryside through the dynamism of private landownership and stewardship.



CEMA is the association representing the European agricultural machinery industry. With 11 national member associations, the CEMA network represents both large multinational companies and numerous European SMEs active in the sector.

Q. European Bee Award - Varroa mite is being a terrible scourge for honeybees in Europe in the recent years. How the idea of developing a varroa scanner come up to you?

A. APISFERO - The idea was born thanks to the fact that one of us is a beekeeper and we are experts in the technologies that today enable several new systems, in particular artificial neural networks. We wanted to understand if it was possible to automate the counting of the natural fall of Varroa mite: it's one of the main methods to control the parasite, but it takes a long time, it is a tedious operation and the results depend on the person who performs it.

Q. EBA - Could you briefly explain who are the main players behind APISFERO? (researchers, technology developers, beekeepers, public institutions, private sector).

A.A- APISFERO A.P.S. is an association located in Turin and is an accredited research organization with the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research. We are a group of people with experience in the field of beekeeping, electronics, visual analysis and artificial intelligence.

Q. EBA - What is the main purpose of scanning the hives? How does it help beekeepers in fighting about varroa mites?

A.A- Varroa is known to be the main enemy of honey bees, which reduces or kills colonies, contributing to the pollinator decline, with serious environmental and economic damage. It is therefore necessary to fight against the ectoparasite and this battle is based on the esteem of its presence into the hive. Counting is fundamental in order to reduce treatments, so as not to damage the honey bees and to avoid the development of resistance to varroacide. The BeeVS allows the Varroa to be counted easily and precisely, reducing the treatments to the necessary ones needed to keep the amount of ectoparasite under control, as indicated in the Integrated Pest Management principle, widely adopted in agriculture.

Q. EBA - Since BeeVS® is available on the market, is there any particular European region where this technology has been further taken up?

A.A - After months of verification of the scanner results, carried out during 2018, the Austrian Biene Österreich federation adopted the BeeVS for its Varroa Alert Service, a service that monitors the progress of the Varroa throughout the Austrian territory and that indicates to beekeepers the level of infestation in their area, in order to intervene in time and effectively. To obtain detailed and reliable information, the organization uses numerous scanners distributed throughout Austria. Biene Österreich also uses BeeVS in the selection program of queen bees, with the aim of selecting specimens that are more tolerant to Varroa.

Q. EBA - How did you hear about the European Bee Award? Would the prize help to support your initiatives?

A.A - The European Bee Award was indicated to us by one of the main users of the scanner, who is very enthusiastic about the device. We are working to extend the capabilities of the scanner: in addition to counting the Varroa we want to extract additional information from the floor debris that can help beekeeping. The award will be very useful to our association to carry out this research activity.

Check all details on www.apisfero.org