

Solitary bees' protection and bee-friendly spraying technology winner projects of the IV edition of the European Bee Award

In a ceremony hosted by MEP Franc Bogovič at the European Parliament in Brussels and in presence of EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society Mariya Gabriel, this year's award celebrates in particular the great commitment of private and public organisations, as well as individual initiatives, to pollinators' wellbeing and bee-friendly farming practices in Europe.

Brussels, 6 December 2017 — To acknowledge innovative & practical ideas to protect pollinators in European farming, the European Bee Award, established by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and the European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA), was handed over last night to this year's winners:

- **"A bee project for solitary bees"** by the Belgian material solution company Sibelco, as part as its Biodiversity and European Species protection programme, is the winner of the "land management practices" award; while
- **"Dropleg: Application of Plant Protection Products below the flowering level in rapeseed"** presented by the specialised nozzles company Lechler GmbH receives the "innovative & technological solutions" prize.

Moreover, a **"Friend of pollinators"** award has been bestowed to Mr. Marek Nowakowski for his contribution to the protection of pollinators as a private individual, and a special mention was granted to **"Terras de Mondalva"** for an integrated beekeeping project for rural development in Portugal.

Franc Bogovič MEP, Member of the Jury, stresses "the European Bee Award adds the necessary recognition to very valuable projects which year-on-year show there is a shared commitment to protecting pollinators in European agriculture".

Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society congratulated the initiative "Events such as the European Bee Award are very important for the promotion of the protection of bee health. It is crucial that we maintain bee-health and the interests of the beekeeping sector on the top of the political agenda, at all levels, as well as to promote initiatives and projects, which allow awareness-raising for policy-makers and citizens, and to be proactive in addressing the challenges of the beekeeping sector".

Thierry de l'Escaille, Secretary General of ELO: "there has been fierce competition for the Prize, making it difficult to choose a winner. Yet the high number and quality of projects submitted is a great tribute to the dedicated efforts that are being made across Europe to halt bee decline and enhance biodiversity."

On behalf of CEMA **Gilles Dryancour, Honorary President**, welcomed the contribution of the farm equipment industry to develop cutting-edge spraying technology that improves in parallel farming activities and the protection of pollinators' populations, as showcased by the *Dropleg project*.

In 2017, the European Bee Award competition received 18 applications from 11 different European countries. Last night's award ceremony gathered over 100 participants: bee-keepers, policy makers, landowners, academia and representatives of the agri-food sector exchanged best practices, while enjoying a festive networking evening celebrating bees and biodiversity.

“A bee project for solitary bees” by Sibelco

Winner of the Category: “Land Management practices”

90% of bee species worldwide are solitary bees and they provide essential pollination services. “A bee project for solitary bees” is an initiative to protect wild pollinators in Sibelco’s quarries as part of the wider Sibelco Biodiversity Strategy and European species protection program. The project includes several tools to manage quarries sustainably before, during and after operation. The quarries form very diverse landscapes, attracting solitary bees looking to nest in dry siliceous habitats on south-facing slopes. Raising awareness about bee diversity within the company is a priority for the project. People working in the quarries should understand what solitary bees are, and why they are found in the quarries. The project also focuses on recognising and creating good habitats for bees, and how to maintain them, by providing guidelines on flowering, nesting and monitoring.

“Friend of Pollinators”

Special Recognition 2017

This year, the jury of the European Bee Award has decided to bestow special recognition to a very unique contributor to the protection of pollinators and wildlife. Marek Nowakowski is an individual who has set himself the goal of “turning environmental science into practice”. His expertise, skills and enthusiasm mean that he has made one of the single biggest contributions to farmland wildlife by a private individual. He is the author of many publications and films, including the book “Habitat creation and management for pollinators” edited by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), which gathers his 35 years of field experience.

As an agronomist and wildlife enthusiast, he has helped many companies, governments and commercial organisations over the years to turn environmental research into farmland deliverables.

“Dropleg: Application of ppp below the flowering level in rapeseed” by Lechler GmbH

Winner of the Category: “Innovative technological solutions”

The DroplegUL device and application technique, developed by *Lechler GmbH* in partnership with the University of Hohenheim and Südwestdeutsche Saatzeit family farm, aims at avoiding contact between pollinators and plant protection products (PPPs) when they are applied in the flowering period. This technique addresses conflicts between beekeepers and farmers that arise when PPPs are applied at this time (e.g. rapeseed crop). The DroplegUL application technique allows under-flower application in order to avoid the deposition of PPPs on rapeseed flowers, one of the most important flowering agricultural crops for bees in Europe. As a result, there is almost no exposure to PPPs for flower-visiting bees and other pollinator insects. The device has already been successfully tested in other flowering crops. The DroplegUL device is commercially available and almost all boom sprayers can be equipped with it.

“Terras de Mondalva: beekiping in integrated rural development” by Medronhalva

Special Mention 2017

Created in 2013, the Terras de Mondalva business project is dedicated to a multisectoral and integrated agriculture, forestry and valorisation of the natural heritage and resources, with emphasis on two primordial aspects: the cultivation of the traditional “medronhal” strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), focusing on creating an innovative and differentiated rural development model, and environmental and social development around the Alva River, in the heart of the estate. Beekeeping occupies a central place in bringing all the project’s features together: on one hand recognizing the importance of the services bees provide for the preservation of the environment, productivity of crops, both increasing yields and assuring regularity and quality, on the other hand because of the economic interest in the direct products from the Beehive. The objective is that beekeepers and agro foresters combine efforts to protect existing bee communities and promoting growth and sustainability. In order to materialize a comprehensive strategy, 90 hives have been installed in the strawberry tree groves.

About the ELO – European Landowners' Association

The 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.

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About CEMA – European Agricultural Machinery

CEMA is the European association representing the agricultural machinery industry. The industry represented by CEMA includes 4,500 manufacturers of agricultural equipment employing directly 135,000 persons and indirectly in the distribution and service network another 125,000 persons. The companies are mainly small and medium-sized manufacturers according to the EU definition and in 2014 had a total turnover of 27 billion euros.

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