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Insect Pollinators Initiative

Sustainable pollination services for UK crops

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Insects are pollinators of 80 % of all plant species in Europe, including most fruits, many vegetables and some biofuel crops. Their pollination service is worth up to £440 million each year in the UK. Clearly, the current declines in both wild pollinators and managed honeybees potentially affects UK agricultural production. This project will determine which wild and managed pollinators contribute to pollination of insect-dependent crops and whether at present the lack of wild pollinators limits agricultural production in UK landscapes. In addition, the researchers will analyze how the supply of managed honeybee hives for crop pollination can be improved. Next, the researchers will investigate whether climate change will affect UK crop pollination in the future. The results will pave the way towards sustainable crop pollination by providing knowledge that can be applied to decisions about crop, landscape and pollinator management practices in the UK. From the start of the project the team will collaborate with major stakeholders (farmers, beekeepers, land managers, conservation agencies) to guarantee that this research produces information required by the UK agricultural community.

This project is in partnership with Dr Mette Termansen and Dr Andy Challinor at the University of Leeds, Dr Giles Budge at the Food and Environment Research Agency National Bee Unit and Dr Simon Potts at the University of Reading.

