

Host a Hive Initiative launched on World Bee Day

As part of the celebrations of World Bee Day today 20 May, 2019, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Andrew Doyle T.D., today announced a “Host a hive, help the honey bee” initiative. This initiative aims to encourage forest owners to introduce beehives to their native woodlands and is in partnership with Woodlands of Ireland and the national beekeeping associations. It is also supported by the Native Irish Honeybee Society.

The Minister also confirmed the arrival of honey bees to Agriculture House with hives installed on Agriculture House’s city centre Headquarters on Kildare Street. This joins DAFM’s Backweston campus as the latest DAFM location to install hives.

Minister Doyle stated, “My Department is a huge supporter of pollinator-friendly initiatives and we continue to invest heavily in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Beekeepers need space for hives in productive foraging areas and what better place to establish a hive than a native woodland. I have no doubt that Irish forest owners will be buzzing at the opportunity to help save Ireland’s honey bees. This will also feed into the national effort to protect and preserve bees under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.”

Native woodlands created and restored under the Department’s National Forestry Programme are not intensively managed thereby making them the ideal locations for hives. The Department is writing to all owners of a woodland created or restored under the Native Woodland Scheme to invite them to contact a beekeeping association if they are interested in hosting a hive or a number of hives.

The scheme involves no effort, or cost, for the land-owner as the beekeepers carry their own insurance, supply the hives and maintain them. Participation benefits the land-owner, by increased pollination in the woodland, and the potential to further develop local honey-producing enterprises similar to Wicklow’s ‘Nectar Way’ agri-food tourism initiative.

These initiatives are the latest in a series of DAFM supports to aid and support bees and beekeepers. Under DAFM’s locally-led schemes, we are now investing €1.2m in a four-year pollinator project led by the National Biodiversity Centre. This will work directly with farmers to help them make their farms more pollinator friendly.

This comes on top of other initiatives including annual grants to the Irish National Beekeepers Federations to help their associated members pursue the craft of beekeeping, to support the purchase of bees and to inform the general public about the environmental role that bees play in maintaining Irish biodiversity and crop production. DAFM also operates National Apiculture Programme which includes provision of a free disease diagnostic service for Irish beekeepers and funds specific research projects on bees.

The Minister added that “ We can all play our part in making Ireland a place where bees can survive and thrive and my Department is fully committed to helping those efforts in any way we can and this ‘Host a Hive’ project is another excellent way to do so”.

Editors note:

Anyone interested in the idea of hosting a beehive can contact either FIBKA at www.irishbeekeeping.ie Tel: 041-9826957 or the IBA clg at www.irishbeekeepersassociation.com Tel: [086-3638249](tel:086-3638249)

Further information: Anne Marie O'Connor, Promotions & Training, Forestry Division. 053 9170382
Further information on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's support for Irish beekeepers and pollinators are available at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/beekeepinghoney/>

The DAFM Pollinator Network's second edition of the newsletter giving an overview of the wide range of Department activities supporting bees and other pollinators is available at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmingsectors/beekeepinghoney/pollinators/>

Further information on the GLAS Scheme is available at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/glas/>

DAFM Pollinator Network led by departmental staff and helps to connect DAFM with other Departments and agencies, researchers, stakeholders, the farming community and the general public. The objectives of the network are to:

- inform policy decisions, ensuring decisions are evidence-based;
- provide guidance and support and collaborate with researchers and institutions to better target research and innovation activities;
- provide input into the design, development, raising awareness and communication of agricultural strategies, schemes and pollinators,
- provide a platform for the internal and external sharing of knowledge and expertise; maximising expertise, time, and pooling resources,
- facilitate communication, engagement and outreach activities and actions with the agricultural and environmental community and the public, building and strengthening our relationships and our collective knowledge and efforts.

Further details regarding the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan are available at <http://pollinators.ie>

Michael and Anne Wilde's from Tara Hill Honey in North Wexford supplied a hive of their Native Irish Bees specially selected from their Tara Hill Apiary to DAFM for the roof of Agriculture House. These bees are suited to the Irish climate are very docile and disease resistant and great honey producers collecting large harvests of honey with very low swarming tendencies. The bees are carefully bred in their mating apiary on the coast in North Wexford

The Department have also funded a number of projects to carry out research on Bees under the Genetic Resources Grant Aid Scheme (GRGAS). This Scheme has an annual call for projects aimed at supporting the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. Projects funded have included studies on the native Irish honeybee *Apis mellifera mellifera* and bumblebees.

