New pollinator guidelines aim to get Ireland's farmland buzzing again

September 22 2017, by Thomas Deane

Credit: Trinity College Dublin

Researchers behind the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) this week

unveiled new Farmland Guidelines to add another strand to a coordinated drive to help Ireland's pollinators survive and thrive. The guidelines were launched at the National Ploughing Championships by Minister of State at Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Andrew Doyle TD.

Pollinators – our bees, bumblebees, hoverflies and other pollinating insects – have suffered huge declines in recent decades, with many now at risk of extinction. To address these declines, the AIPP—a shared plan with over 80 partner organisations that has received support and funding from Bord Bia and the Heritage Council—was launched in 2015.

The new Farmland Guidelines detail five evidence-based actions that can be taken to help make farmland more pollinator-friendly. They are to: maintain native flowering hedgerows; allow wildflowers to grow around the farm; provide nesting places for wild bees; minimise artificial fertiliser use; reduce pesticide inputs.

Professor in Botany at Trinity College Dublin, Jane Stout, is Deputy-Chair of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. She said: "These guidelines have been developed over the past two years in collaboration with farmers, farming organisations, scientists and other relevant stakeholders, in order to develop straight-forward, evidence-based advice for farmers."

"Although most of Irish agriculture is pasture-based, and not currently reliant on insect-pollination services, taking action to support bees and other pollinators will benefit Irish farmers by reinforcing Ireland's green image in premium markets, and by providing additional benefits such as supporting natural pest control and protecting watercourses, keeping farming options open for future generations, and, in a lot of cases, saving farmers time and money."

The new Farmland Guidelines have been developed in collaboration with

Bord Bia and specifically Origin Green, the national sustainability programme for the Irish food and drink industry. Farmers who are certified to one of the Bord Bia Sustainable Quality Assurance schemes are members of the Origin Green programme.

The Farmland Guidelines are available for download at www.pollinators.ie along with lots of tips and other resources on how to help.

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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