



More pollinating insects on Fair to Nature farms

New research has confirmed that '**Fair to Nature**' farms support significantly more pollinating insects than conventional farms. During summer 2015 Sophie Potter, working at the University of East Anglia, observed hoverflies on 10 **Fair to Nature** farms across East Anglia and counted over 70% more insects in the field margins compared with 10 similar farms where conventional farming is employed.

We've all heard about the decline of our Bumble Bee population and their importance in the pollination of British food crops. But, did you know that the population and distribution of the humble Hoverfly could be even more critical. There are 25 species of British Bumble Bees and, by comparison, over 250 species of Hoverfly.

With the objective of economic and efficient food production, British farmers are driven to cultivate more of the countryside and, using modern machinery and chemicals, manage the environment to protect their crops and maximise yields. The concern is that this results in the loss of suitable habitats for a host of beneficial insects, especially pollinating species like bees and hoverflies. '**Fair to Nature**' farmers manage at least 10% of their productive farmland area to create suitable habitats for beneficial insects and other native species of insects, mammals and birds and they have always been confident that they support more wildlife than conventional farms. This new research has confirmed that, in the case of Hoverflies, **Fair to Nature** farms have not only more individual insects, but also a significantly wider variety of species. In the research which was undertaken in May, June and July an average of 13 different species were observed on **Fair to Nature** farms compared with only 9 species on conventional farms.

Brin Hughes, Technical Manager leading the **Fair to Nature** project said, 'We are very pleased but not surprised by Sophie's results. Out and about on the farms, I see the difference **Fair to Nature** makes to wildlife every day, but it's great that we now have further scientific proof of the benefit to these important species. We hope that this will lead to more manufacturers and retailers confidently specifying **Fair to Nature** ingredients as part of their food chain sustainability.'

Brands using predominantly **Fair to Nature** ingredients carry the distinctive **Fair to Nature** logo on their packaging, leaflets and websites.

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Notes to editors

Companies in the '**Fair to Nature**' partnership include:

- **Allinson Flour** – accredited Nature Friendly Farming plain and self-raising flours.
- **The Vitacress Group** – **Steve's Leaves** product range including Pea Shoots & Baby Leaves, Baby Watercress & Little Leaves, Wild Red Rocket & Milder Leaves, Fennel Tops & Sweet Leaves and Wasabi Rocket & Other Fab Leaves www.stevesleaves.co.uk
- **VHB Herbs** a range of fresh cut and potted herbs
- **Wight Salads** Isle of Wight range of fresh tomatoes and tomato-based products under **The Tomato Stall** brand
- **European Oat Millers** – supplying ingredients to major food companies for nearly 30 years; accredited oats, wheat and barley grown for breakfast cereals is processed at their Bedford mill.
- **Norfolk Quail** - a family-run farming business specialising in high welfare quail meat and eggs
- **Abbotts Farm Eggs** – free range eggs from hens living on Fair to Nature accredited farms and distributed into restaurants through **First Choice Produce Limited**
- **Honeychop Horse Feeds** – oat straw used as an ingredient in all feeds.
- **Just for Pets** - Retail chain of pet shops selling a range of Conservation Grade Pet foods and care products as well as wild bird foods
- **Lordington Lavender** – a range of luxury goods, including essential oils and soaps, all from the French Provençal lavender variety Maillette grown on their own farm.
- **Honeyfields** – a range of wild bird food including grains and seeds grown on Conservation Grade accredited farms
- **ChapelWood** – a range of wild bird food including grains and seeds grown on Conservation Grade accredited farms and distributed by **Scotts Miracle Grow Ltd**
- **Garden Bird Supplies** – a range of wild bird food including grains and seeds grown on Conservation Grade accredited farms
- **Bardfield Vineyard** – Bacchus and Reichensteiner grapes produce a range of still and sparkling wines from the Great Lodge vineyard in Essex
- **Marriage's Specialist Foods** – The **Honeyfields** range of wild bird and animal foods sourced from Conservation Grade farms and distributed through independent retailers
- **RSPB** – Online and retail supply of wild bird foods and the country's leading wildlife charity
- **Nature's Own Pet** – Hay and straw bedding for domestic pets all sourced from Conservation Grade Farms and sold through independent and multiple pet retailers
- **Pampurred Pets** – Retail chain of more than 50 pet shops selling a range of Conservation Grade Pet foods and care products as well as wild bird foods
- **Marisma21** – artisan salt production from the salt pans of the Bay of Cadiz
- **S. L. Morrell** – beef from Richard Morrell's herd of Belted Galloway's

Conservation Grade is an independent accreditation organisation that facilitates commercial relationships between farmers and consumers on an area rapidly approaching 100,000 acres in the UK through a Fair to Nature system of agriculture that optimises both crop yields and biodiversity conservation. Conservation Grade has developed a truly unique system of sustainable farming, founded on science and commercial viability. It is internationally recognised by The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study, as well as Natural England and leading NGOs such as the RSPB, for its significant contribution to the conservation of biodiversity through the commercial marketplace.