

WALES TO LEAD UK IN TACKLING BEE CRISIS

Wales will be leading the way in tackling a bee crisis, as Environment Minister John Griffiths announces a new action plan [1] at the Royal Welsh Show today (Monday 23 July).

Bees and other pollinating insects are in steep decline, threatening our environment, our economy, and our food. Now government action could mean help and advice for farmers and communities to protect the more than 250 species of bee in the UK.

Friends of the Earth Cymru has welcomed the Welsh Government's announcement of a Pollinator Action Plan. The environment charity's The Bee Cause campaign [2], launched earlier this year, calls on the Welsh and UK Governments to take action to halt the decline of bees and other essential pollinators.

Managed honey bee colonies fell by over 50 per cent between 1985 and 2005. Wild honey bees are nearly extinct in many parts of the UK, and a quarter of wild bee species are considered rare or endangered.

Recent research by the University of Reading has revealed it would cost at least £1.8 billion a year to pollinate crops by hand if bees were to disappear [3].

Bleddyn Lake, from Friends of the Earth Cymru, said:

“We're delighted the Minister has acted so quickly on our call to help protect bees and other pollinators, which are in steep decline throughout the UK.

“Thousands of people have already backed our campaign, The Bee Cause, which calls for action on habitat loss and pesticide-use.

“Farmers, councils and communities need help and advice to protect these essential pollinators. One third of our food wouldn't be available at all without them, and it will cost us heavily if we lose them.

“It's fantastic that Wales is taking the lead with action to safeguard our environment and save the economy millions of pounds – the rest of the UK must follow quickly.”