



SOIL CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF CANADA CONSEIL CANADIEN DE CONSERVATION DES SOLS

*The face and voice of soil conservation in Canada
Le visage et la voix de la conservation des sols au Canada*

Operation Pollinator a success on Canadian farms



One third of the food we eat comes from pollination and that is why programs like Operation Pollinator are so important to the Canadian landscape. Syngenta Canada is a long-term sustainability leader in Canada and the Operation Pollinator program is a key component of the company's work. The program's mandate is to support activities that enhance biodiversity, habitat and other practical initiatives that contribute to healthy pollinator populations. Partnering with the Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC), Operation Pollinator is focused on research and additional partnerships to promote the health and well-being of bees and other pollinating insects, providing participants the opportunity to redirect land considered to be lower in productivity to the establishment of pollinator-friendly habitats.

Launched in 2017, the three-year program had many successes despite some regions suffering from extreme drought conditions. Over 130 sites were successfully established, for a total of 499 acres of pollinator habitat across the Prairies and in Ontario.

"It was great to see the enthusiasm and engagement from all our program participants across the four provinces," says SCCC executive director, Jim Tokarchuk. "I know they will look at their acres with crop production challenges in a new light from now on as they provide an important ecosystem function to their farms and neighbouring fields."

"The program has brought together individual farmers and organizations that are interested



in creating habitat on the farm for pollinators and other wildlife," says Paul Hoekstra, Government & Industry Relations Manager with Syngenta Canada. "By focusing on creating natural areas for bees and other pollinating insects, Operation Pollinator offers a practical and meaningful way to improve biodiversity on the farm."

Operation Pollinator is a positive success story, which shows there is an appetite for pragmatic programs and initiatives around sound, sustainable management practices.

POLLINATOR PARTICIPANT SURVEY

A short survey was sent out to program participants in 2019 and here are some of the results:

- 80% of respondents indicated they wanted to "provide another food source for bees and pollinating insects on my farm" as the reason why they participated in the program.
- Over 70% of respondents have future plans to enhance biodiversity on their land beyond participating in the Operation Pollinator program.
- When asked what aspects of sustainable agriculture are important on their farm, pollinator health, soil health, and water conservation and quality were the top three reasons cited.

"We're quite proud of this program and the accomplishments of our provincial partners, and specifically, the farmers who participated," says Tokarchuk. "We would like to express our sincere thanks to Syngenta Canada for their leadership and efforts over the last three years."

OPERATION POLLINATOR ON CANADIAN FARMS:

- PROMOTES THE WELL-BEING OF BEES AND OTHER POLLINATORS IN AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES
- PROGRAM CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCCC AND PROVINCIAL PARTNERS IN PRAIRIE CANADA AND ONTARIO
- SEED PROVIDED TO DEVELOP POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY HABITAT ON 1-2 ACRE SITES PER FARM, WITH SOME FARMS PURCHASING ADDITIONAL SEED TO PLANT EXPANDED ACREAGE
- OVER 130 SITES ESTABLISHED 499 ACRES IN TOTAL ACROSS FOUR PROVINCES

SASKATCHEWAN PRODUCER TESTIMONIAL:

"WE ALL HAVE LITTLE PIECES OF LAND THAT WE TRY TO GET INTO WITH A DRILL AND CAN BARELY TURN AROUND. IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD FIT TO USE SOME OF THOSE AREAS IN A WAY THAT PROMOTES CONSERVATION."

-DUSTIN HANNAH, FARMER, FOAM LAKE, SK

MANITOBA PRODUCER TESTIMONIAL:

"PLANTING POLLINATOR HABITAT ON MARGINAL LANDS WAS A GREAT WAY TO USE THOSE UNPRODUCTIVE ACRES. WE WERE QUITE EXCITED TO BE PART OF THE PROGRAM AND IT WAS A GREAT FIT FOR OUR FARM."

-KAREN KLASSEN, FARMER, MANITOU, MB



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info@soilcc.ca 204-792-2424 www.soilcc.ca @soilcouncil