

Competitive advantage: Addressing barriers to sustainable supply – conserving pollinators (Sainsburys & Carrefour)

Thirty five percent of the global food production from plants benefits from animal pollination. The value of all this ranges from \$112 billion to \$200 billion annually. Bees are in decline globally, linked to escalating levels of pollution, disease, and loss of habitat.

Sainsbury and Syngenta have developed a nationwide project in the UK known as 'Operation Bumblebee'. The project has already resulted in the enrichment of over 130,000 acres of field in over 500 farms with bumblebee critical pollen and nectar. As well as increasing the population of bumblebees by potentially many millions, other wildlife – including butterflies, other insects and farmland birds – will also benefit. In addition, as part of **Carrefour's Quality Lines'** supplier specification, fallow land is encouraged to promote the sustainability of bee populations and the biodiversity of wild fauna.

The **Co-Operative Food company** in the UK recently launched 'Plan Bee' – a ten point program aimed at addressing concerns regarding rapidly declining pollinators. This plan included prohibition of the use of neonicotinoid-based pesticides on own-brand fresh produce, funding for research to investigate the decline in the honeybee, trialing of a bee-friendly wildflower seed mix on Co-Op Farms, encouragement of beekeepers to establish hives on Co-Op Farms in the UK and a range of awareness raising programs to engage consumers.

Source: <http://www.co-operative.coop>; <http://www.operationbumblebee.co.uk>, excerpt from Carrefour's Quality Line standards

Nestlé's Nespresso Sustainable quality program for coffee

The *Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality™* Coffee Program aims to stabilise the supply chain and safeguard the long-term supply of the highest quality coffee. It promotes environmental sustainability and social responsibility on the farms that produce coffee for Nespresso's gourmet espresso capsules. The program discourages the unnecessary use of fertilizers, encourages integrated pest management strategies and promotes use of shade coffee to better protect the crops from erosion, and diversify the plantation area. Trees used for shade such as banana, citrus, avocado, both provide nutrients to the soil and offer additional sources of income for farmers. The program protects ecosystems by incorporating planning and management of protected natural areas. It prohibits hunting and captivity of wild animals and illegal logging. The program includes ecosystem restoration, e.g. planting trees near water sources. The Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) verifies that the farms in the AAA program are implementing better methods and are decreasing their impact on the natural world.

A Tool for the Assessment of Sustainable Quality (TASQ™) is used to help implement the AAA program. It includes quality, environmental, social and economic indicators. Farmers and growers are provided with a self-assessment

guidebook and are trained to use it. A team of agronomists later assesses these farms and the resulting data from the TASQ™ is analyzed. Farms found to be falling short on certain critical practices such as deforestation or the misuse of dangerous agrochemicals must correct these problems before they can qualify for the program.

Currently 50% of *Nespresso* coffee is sourced through this program (25,000 farmers in five countries). *Nespresso* has recently committed to source 80% (80,000 farms, nine countries) of its coffee from the AAA Sustainable Quality™ Coffee Program including Rainforest Alliance Certification™ by 2013.

Source: <http://www.ecolaboration.com/#/aaa/en/coffee/aaa> (July 2009)

Partnering to grow strawberries sustainably

In Spain, **Ahold** and WWF are working in a project that links strawberry production with protecting wetlands. Since February 2007, strawberries are sold with a small booklet explaining that their purchase is helping to protect an important water source, the Coto Doñana wetland nature reserve, in the south of Spain. The partnership is also currently reviewing other potential supply chains for similar projects.

Source: <http://www.ahold.com>