



FOR RELEASE

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Aussie Farmers Back the Bees

New Bee Friendly Farming® Certification Program Launched

Farmers and gardeners are helping to protect Australia's precious pollinators through the brand-new Bee Friendly Farming certification program.

Pollinators need help! ¹Scientists around the world have sounded the alarm that we are amid an 'insect apocalypse,' driven by pesticides, climate change, pollution, land clearing, bushfires, and industrial agriculture.

The Australian-first Bee Friendly Farming (BFF) certification program works directly with farmers and gardeners to promote and certify bee-friendly landscapes and practices.

The BFF program is being launched in Australia by the When Bee Foundation, with help from \$50K sponsorship from Founding Platinum partner, Flow Hive.

When Bee Foundation CEO Fiona Chambers said BFF Australia is a science-based program overseen by a national task force of Australian experts.

"The task force ensures BFF supports bees and other pollinators to thrive under Australian conditions whilst optimising the benefits to landholders," she said.

Stu Anderson is a co-inventor of Flow Hive, Platinum Partner for launching Bee Friendly Farming® in Australia.

Mr Anderson said more than half of the Australian continent is devoted to agricultural production and securing pollinator health on farmlands is crucial.

"Pollinators are essential to life as we know it. Bees help to pollinate most of the crops we eat and many that feed farm livestock. Nearly two-thirds of Australia's agricultural production benefits from pollination by bees, but global insect populations are crashing at an alarming rate," he said.

Aussie farmers are getting on board with applications spanning horticulture, grazing and viticulture enterprises.

Mike Hogan has a 4ha certified organic & Bee Friendly farm in Alstonville, northern New South Wales where he grows avocados, custard apples and vanilla beans.

He's implemented several bee-friendly practices at his property, including planting for biodiversity. Coffee, sunflowers, Lilly Pillies and Himalayan Magnolias are just some of the plants he's added to help pollinators.

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¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320718313636>



Mr Hogan says pollinators are vital to a healthy environment, food security and thriving farm economies, making bee friendly agricultural practices crucial.

“Looking after the bees is looking after ourselves and giving back to the environment. A lack of bees means a lack of pollination... In my line of business, if you don’t have the bees, you’re not going to make any money,” he said.

James Bowie is owner of Bowie Beef in Western Australia. According to James, the integration of beef, biodiversity and bees is a ‘no-brainer’.

“There’s pollination benefits from honeybees and native bees, as well as the ecosystem services provided by beneficial insects for predation of crop pests and parasites,” he said.

Ian Rathjen owns Whistling Eagle Vineyard in Colbinabbin, Victoria.

“Bees are a good indicator. If we have a healthy vineyard ecosystem and we have bees present then we know that the environment’s working well,” he said.

To learn more, or to register to become a Bee Friendly Farming certified farm or garden, head to www.BeeFriendlyFarming.org.au

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Available for Interview:

- When Bee Foundation CEO Fiona Chambers
- Flow Hive Co-Founders Stu and Cedar Anderson
- NSW Bee Friendly Farming® Farmer Mike Hogan (case study attached)
- WA Bee Friendly Farming® Farmer James Bowie (case study attached)
- VIC Bee Friendly Farming® farmer Ian Rathjen ([view case study here](#))

Editor’s Note:

A range of high-resolution images and high-quality video footage can be found via this Dropbox: [BFF Launch Images](#).

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Farmer Mike Hogan On Protecting Pollinators

For avocado farmer Mike Hogan protecting Australia's crucial pollinator populations is a matter of survival.

Mr Hogan has been farming for 40 years, producing everything from angora goats to apples. His family have steadily developed their avocado farm in Alstonville, northern New South Wales over the past two decades.

"We have a 4ha certified organic farm with 450 avocado trees, 85 custard apple trees and 60 vanilla bean vines," he said.

The Hogans' farm supports more than a hundred native beehives and 50 honey beehives. Together, these bees provide essential pollination services for their avocados, custard apples and vanilla beans.

Mike Hogan says pollinators are vital to a healthy environment, food security and thriving farm economies, making bee friendly agricultural practices crucial.

"Looking after the bees is looking after ourselves and giving back to the environment. A lack of bees means a lack of pollination... In my line of business, if you don't have the bees, you're not going to make any money," he said.

The Hogans have implemented several bee-friendly practices on their property, including planting for biodiversity. Coffee, sunflowers, peanuts, Lilly Pillies and Himalayan Magnolias are just some of the plants they've added to help pollinators.

Mike Hogan is encouraged by positive changes within Australia's farming community to help pollinators, including a shift toward integrated pest management to reduce chemicals and sprays.

He believes the Australian launch of the Bee Friendly Farming program is an exciting development for Australian farmers.

"As part of coming on board they get certified as a bee friendly farm. There are certain criteria that they have to meet... It's not arduous, it's working with nature for nature."

To learn more, or to register to become a Bee Friendly Farming certified farm or garden, head to www.beefriendlyfarming.org.au

Editor's Note:

Mike Hogan is available for interview. For more information, contact Penny Smits on 0424 702 271 or penny@wordplaypr.com.au



Farmer James Bowie on 'Bees and Beef'

James Bowie has a ten-year view of a “bees and beef” vision to build the two together in a sustainable synergy. It’s all about creating a balance between a prime Angus beef operation, and a sustainable farm ‘ecosystem’ that supports honeybees and native pollinators.

According to James, the integration of beef, biodiversity and bees is a “no-brainer”, with pollination benefits from honeybees and native bees, as well as the ecosystem services provided by beneficial insects for predation of crop pests and parasites.

The beef enterprise has recently been complemented by bees, as James purchased 60 beehives from a local beekeeper. The acquisition fulfils a long-held interest and appreciation of the value of bees in performing pollination services on-farm, as well as the honey the bees will produce from adjacent native Jarrah forests (*Eucalyptus marginata*).

With a farming background going back generations, James wants his children, Jamie and Arabella, to grow up on a farm that has a sustainable future. The family began farming in the Greenbushes area in 1968, when James’ father emigrated from Scotland.

The enterprise consists of 1620 ha across ten properties in the Bridgetown/Yornup area of Western Australia. The farms encompass a prime Angus cattle beef operation, as well as cropping and fodder. Returning to the farm full-time with his wife, Katina, James brings a new view to agriculture and on-farm operations, since leaving a corporate career in natural resources and mining.

On the farm, Bowie Beef has a philosophy of nurturing the land. They have a focus on improved pasture management and fencing; revegetation for multiple benefits of shade and shelter, pollinator forage, insect habitat, and ecosystem services; pasture improvement with biodiverse perennials that provide year-round pollen and nectar; and which function as pollinator pathways across the landscape between remnant vegetation and revegetated areas.

James counts inspiration for beginning his journey with bees on the farm from meeting key agronomists, scientists and beekeepers. He sees a benefit of becoming Bee Friendly Farming Certified in gaining access to expert advice to continually learn and improve the farm operations in a bee-friendly way.

The interaction of agriculture and science is an important concept to James, who appreciates quantitative data and measurables to track and record the benefits and improvements on-farm, since taking over the farm three years ago. From soil testing, silage and hay analysis to fertiliser regimes, James values the scientific approach as applicable to undertaking pollinator counts and other research to gauge the outcomes of Bee Friendly Farming.

With an eye on present and future climate change, James is interested in the integration of programs to generate carbon-credits on the farm via environmental plantings that also enhance pollinator habitat. James believes the beef industry will be increasingly scrutinised for its environmental operations and greenhouse-gas emissions. A pro-active approach to farm management, with an environmental focus, to support bees, biodiversity and beef, will ensure Bowie Beef (and bees) has a sustainable future.