Precision Apiculture: enhancing the health and effectiveness of managed honeybees for soft fruit production

PhD Studentship for October 2020

Academic supervisor: Prof Simon Potts, University of Reading
Industry supervisor: Kate Williams, Berryworld

The annual benefits of pollination for soft fruit production in the UK is worth £490M. This studentship will use innovative research approaches to develop a novel tool to improve the health of honeybee colonies and optimally deploy hives to maximise benefits to soft fruit production. Manipulative field experiments will be used to determine the optimal densities and locations of hives on farms. Hives will be enabled with high-tech sensor arrays to monitor colony health and activity in real time to allow detection and rapid response to honeybee health issues. Combining these approaches with pollination and production data will underpin development of a new tool to allow growers to make informed decisions about the sustainable management of honeybee hives.

The student will be part of the world-leading Pollinator research group at the University of Reading and work closely with BerryWorld who are the UK’s foremost soft fruit marketing company (annual turnover >£300M).

What is the CTP?
This funded project forms part of the Waitrose Collaborative Training Partnership (CTP) between the Waitrose Partnership, their international food production and supply companies, Lancaster University, the University of Reading, University of Warwick and Rothamsted Research. The CTP will deliver studentships on the themes of sustainable crop production, sustainable soil and water and biodiversity and ecosystem services in agriculture. This project is based at University of Reading.

Who should Apply?

Applicants should have the minimum of a UK Honours Degree at 2:1 level or equivalent in subjects such as ecology, agriculture, or biological science and hold a full UK driving license. A Masters in a relevant subject, and/or experience of beekeeping is desirable (not essential).

Funding

Full studentships (UK/EU tuition fees and stipend (£15,009 2019/2020 tax-free) for 4 years for UK/EU students subject to eligibility criteria. Unfortunately, studentships are not available to non-UK/EU applicants.
A student must have:
• Settled status in the UK, meaning they have no restrictions on how long they can stay
• Been ‘ordinarily resident’ in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of the grant. This means they must have been normally residing in the UK (apart from temporary or occasional absences)

And

• Not been residing in the UK wholly or mainly for the purpose of full-time education. (This does not apply to UK or EU nationals).

For further details please contact Prof. Simon Potts: s.g.potts@reading.ac.uk for application queries contact Roz Wareing, r.wareing@lancaster.ac.uk. Visit the Waitrose CTP Website www.sustainableagriculturewaitrose.org/training/ctp/

How to apply

Follow the instructions on How to apply of the Waitrose CTP website http://sustainableagriculturewaitrose.org/training/ctp/ctp-application-process/how-to-apply/

Send all applications to this unique email address as per the instructions on the How to apply webpage following link from FindAPhD

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Deadline 31st January 2020 Midday