

Organic farming's positive impact on bees may be 'overestimated,' new study suggests

Intensive agricultural landscapes can be hostile for bees due to a lack of floral and nesting resources, and due to management-related stress such as pesticide use and soil tillage We studied the effects of farming intensity (organic vs. conventional, number of insecticide applications) and availability of semi-natural habitats at the field and landscape scale on pollinator visits and pollen delivery to pumpkin in Germany.

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In contrast to our expectations, local management (organic farming and field-bordering seminatural habitats) had no significant effects on pollinator visits and consequently on pollen delivery. This may be owing to the large foraging ranges of honey and bumble bees in combination with the high attractiveness of pumpkin flowers.

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The number of insecticide applications did not differ significantly between organic and conventional management in our study. However, management varied strongly within organic farming. Organic fields managed according to the EU-Eco regulation 834/2007 had more insecticide applications than conventional fields and organic fields managed by rules from organic associations, which ban insecticides completely

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Overall, the positive effects of organic farming on beneficial insects may have been overestimated owing to studies only including farms under very strict organic management without any pesticide use.

Read full, original article: [Dominance of cropland reduces the pollen deposition from bumble bees](#)