

PRESS RELEASE

## Enhancing Biodiversity in Municipal '*Land in Hand*'

**Forum Moderne Landwirtschaft (FML e. V. – Forum Modern Agriculture)  
presents practical guide for shaping and maintaining '*land in hand*'**

**Berlin, 31 March 2015:** Just in time for the onset of spring, the Initiative "Innovation & Environment" of the Forum Moderne Landwirtschaft e. V. launched a practical guide for shaping and maintaining municipal '*land in hand*' in the agricultural landscape. The new brochure offers practical tips and proposals for action which can be implemented by mayors and involved citizens to protect and enhance biodiversity in their municipalities.

'*Land in hand*' stands for areas which, not being subject to any particular use, are present in the open landscape "anyway". That applies to roadside verges, traffic islands, railway embankments, terraces and many other comparable sites. The equally simple and far-reaching idea of the '*land in hand*'-concept is to upgrade the value of these areas with little cost, so they can serve as retreats and space for development for wild animal and plant species.

As they administer multiple ecosystem functions, bumblebees and wild bees were chosen as particular target species by the initiators of the '*land in hand*'-project. "Wild bees are also important pollinators in agriculture", explains Christian Schmid-Egger, wild bee expert and co-author of the brochure.

Matthias Trapp, geoscientist at the Institute of Agro-Ecology in Neustadt, Rhineland-Palatinate, substantiates on the basis of a scientific study of '*land in hand*' potentials in Germany that three to six percent of the whole area could be reasonably used for the '*land in hand*'-concept. Following the identification of such potentials on a local basis, a set-up and maintenance plan then is drafted and implemented in practice. If a municipal lawn for example is only mowed once instead of three times a year, and if appropriate seeds are sowed on that area, a diverse flowering meadow will develop instead of the monotonous lawn that used to be there before, thus providing a valuable food resource for wild bees, butterflies and many other insects.

The '*land in hand*'-concept deliberately focuses on measures which can be easily implemented by municipalities or groups of interested citizens such as schools or associations, by their own hands and without major cost. "If we succeed in using just

one percent of the available area for the benefit of nature, we already contribute decisively to the protection of many domestic species”, explains project manager Kerstin Krohn her commitment in this matter. The project team expects a particular boost for the environment from the common agreement and mutual action of municipalities and farmers in the sense of interlinked habitats for wild bees for example. The new brochure “Eh da-Flächen nutzen – Artenvielfalt fördern. Praxisleitfaden für Anlage und Pflege” (“Using ‘*land in hand*’-areas – enhancing biodiversity. Practical guide for set-up and maintenance”), is available (currently in German only) at:

#### **Forum Moderne Landwirtschaft e. V.**

Ms Kerstin Krohn

Project Manager “Innovation & Environment”

Wilhelmsaue 37

10713 Berlin

tel: +49 30 88 66 355 14

fax: +49 30 88 66 355 90

mobile: +40 152 339 678 64

e-Mail: [info@innovation-naturhaushalt.de](mailto:info@innovation-naturhaushalt.de)

[www.innovation-naturhaushalt.de](http://www.innovation-naturhaushalt.de)

#### **About the initiative “Innovation & Environment”**

Established under the umbrella of the Forum Moderne Landwirtschaft e. V., the initiative “Innovation & Environment” wants to contribute to increasing public awareness that productive agriculture and natural environment do not contradict but in fact depend on each other.