

## BEES FOR THE PONTIFICAL FARMS AT CASTELGANDOLFO

VATICAN CITY, 20 SEP 2011 (VIS) - As part of its initiatives to mark the Day for the Protection of Creation, the Italian agricultural organisation "Coldiretti" has given Benedict XVI eight beehives containing more than 500,000 bees. The beehives will be kept at the pontifical farm of Castelgandolfo where they will be used in pollination and the production of honey (some 280 kilos a year).

Coldiretti explained that bees play a vital role in the planet's ecosystem and their disappearance would have disastrous consequences for health and the environment: a third of human food production depends on crops pollinated by insects, eighty percent of which are bees.

The "Campagna Amica" Association will provide technical assistance to the pontifical farms to oversee the protection of the bees and the production of honey. Castelgandolfo is considered to be a model farm because it unites traditional production methods with modern technology. It has 25 dairy cows, 300 hens and 60 cockerels as well as an ancient olive grove producing three thousand litres of oil a year, an orchard of apricot and peach trees and a greenhouse of ornamental flowers.

VIS 20110920 (200)

Reprinted from the Vatican Information Services, September 20, 2011