Agricultural and environmental policies

Wageningen University study - Time to listen to data

In the report "Impact Assessment of EC 2030 Green Deal Targets for Sustainable Crop Production," Wageningen University and Research analysed the impact of the European Commission's 2030 targets on EU agricultural production. Authors concluded that achieving the Farm to Fork targets on reducing pesticides and fertilizers, while increasing set-aside land and organic area will mean lower output, shifting farm production to non-EU countries, as well as cutting European farm incomes. Following the results of the study, Fertilizers Europe together with the Agri-Food Chain Coalition (the association representing 11 leading associations in the agri-food sector in Brussels) urged the European Commission to conduct a holistic impact assessment and policy measures that support innovation and do not jeopardise EU producers, obliging them to outsource to countries with less stringent environmental regulations.

WUR Impact Assesment on Farm to Fork targets: Overview of expected economic impacts related to the achievement of the targets

Scenario	Production & prices	Trade	Indirect land use change	Negative impact on the value of production
2 -Reduction in fertilizer use	- Production declines below 15% - Price increases below 20%	- Increases in net imports (maize, rapeseed and citrus) - Declines in net exports (tomatoes, apples, olives, wine and hops)	- ILUC 1: 2 million ha - ILUC2: 3 million ha	Almost EUR 92 billion
4 – Combined targets Reduction in pesticide and fertilizer use + 10% set aside	- Production declines of around 10-20% - Large price increases (olives, wine and hops)	- Increases in net imports (maize and rapeseed) - Declines in net exports (olives, wine and hops)	- ILUC 1: 2.5 million ha - ILUC2: 5.4 million ha	At least EUR 111 billion

Source: WUR , Impact Assessment study on EC 2030 Green Deal Targets for Sustainable Food Production

Carbon farming - mineral fertilizers to play a key role

In December 2021, the European Commission published the Sustainable Carbon Cycles Communication, underlining the crucial role played by agriculture and soil management to reach the European climate objectives. In view of the upcoming discussions, Fertilizers Europe shed light on the role of fertilizers in carbon farming, commissioning a study to a research group of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala, led by Professor Holger Kirchmann. The study focused on the principles of carbon sequestration, the role of farming practices and the use of fertilizers in helping to sequester carbon in agricultural soils.

Key results of the study – mineral fertilizers can play a positive role in carbon farming

- Increasing crop production is the key process to increase carbon sequestration.
- Food production with inorganic nitrogen fertilizers will play a key role in carbon sequestration.
- In the future, nitrogen fertilizer can act as a sink for greenhouse gases.
- It is a myth that organic farming leads to more carbon sequestration. Considering yield declines and necessary land use change, organic farming will lead to a net loss of soil organic carbon and increase emissions compared to conventional farming.

New EU Fertilizing Products Regulation – Leading the way to implementation

On 16 July 2022, the EU Fertilizing Products Regulation (FPR) enters into force, overhauling current rules for placing fertilizing products on the EU market. However, several practical and technical aspects were still presenting challenges for the fertilizer industry in the last phase of the implementation, including the prevailing lack of notified bodies, unclear interpretation of some sections of the FPR, lack of harmonized standards and uncertainty about conformity assessment procedures. That is why Fertilizers Europe, focused its efforts during 2021 and early 2022 on supporting its members to be ready for the entry into application of the regulation. Several workshops were organised for Fertilizers Europe members which saw the participation of the European Commission and Notified Bodies representatives and aimed at finding common solutions for the outstanding issues.

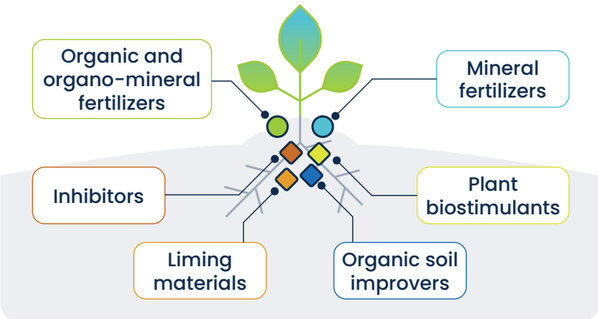
What's new in the Fertilising Products Regulation?

7 Product Function Categories (PFCs)	The scope of the regulation has been widened and now does not only include mineral fertilizers, but also other fertilizing products such as organic fertilizers, organo-mineral fertilizers, soil improvers, liming materials, plant biostimulants, inhibitors and fertilizing product blends.
Notified Bodies	Designated by Members States, notified bodies will carry out the procedures for conformity assessment and will play an important role in bringing fertilizer products on the market.
Standardised Conformity Assessment	Not every fertilizing product has to be assessed by the notified body. The FPR allows self-assessment for certain modules.
Labelling	Products complying with the requirements of the FPR will carry a CE mark Products with a CE mark can be sold in all EU Member States without a need to fulfil additional requirements of national legislations.

Plant nutrition and soil fertility

The different plant nutrition and soil fertility solutions grouped under the heading "fertilizing product" in Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 play different and complementary roles in helping farmers produce plentiful, high-quality crops while helping the EU move towards more sustainable agriculture.

The factsheet developed by Fertilizers Europe jointly with EBIC and ECOFI explains the importance of combining a full range of fertilizing products to ensure an optimum impact on plant yield and quality and minimal environmental impact.

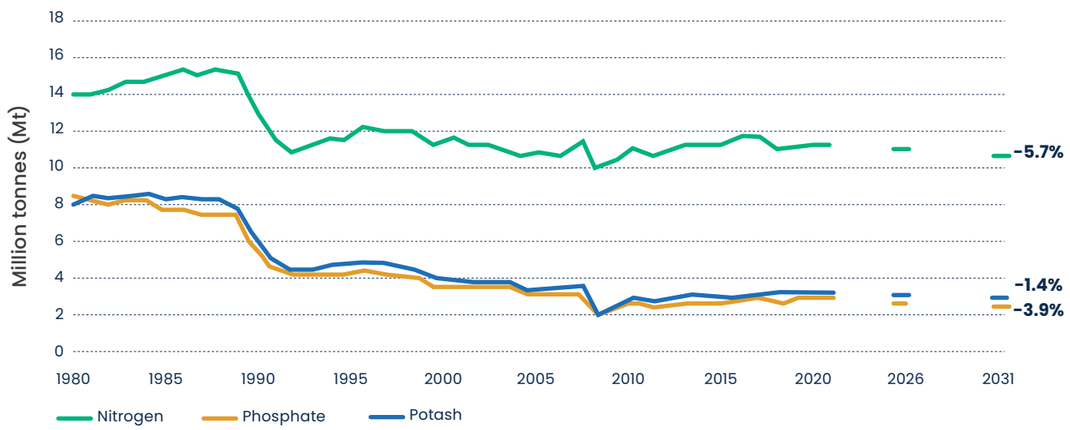


Forecast of food, farming and fertilizer use

The Forecast of Food, Farming and Fertilizer Use continues be a cornerstone of the association's work in the agriculture field, and it constitutes a valuable source of information about Europe's farming. The publication gives an excellent overview of the expected changes in arable farming, cropping patterns and fertilizer consumption in the European Union and its Member States for the coming 10 years.

In the 2021 edition, the annual nutrient consumption over the next 10 years is foreseen to decrease by 4.6%, with nitrogen experiencing the biggest expected decrease. This overall decrease is due to fertilizer consumption reduction in western EU Member States, whereas most Central and Eastern European Member States still demonstrate a trend for higher nutrient consumption. The forecast shows that the political priorities of the European Union and of several European countries are challenging the EU's farming sector as a whole and fertilizer use by farmers as well.

Fertilizer consumption in the European Union



Product Stewardship

Celebrating fertilizer industry's excellence

The European fertilizer industry's aspirations for efficient, safe, secure and environmentally-friendly fertilizer production has led Fertilizers Europe to develop a product stewardship management programme to maintain and consolidate the industry's advanced production techniques and safety procedures across Europe. Fertilizers Europe Product Stewardship Programme is compulsory for all its members, sets the highest global standards and involves all the players in the product chain.

All members of Fertilizers Europe successfully completed the Product Stewardship audit in 2020. To celebrate this important achievement of our industry, Fertilizers Europe produced a video showcasing the commitment of our members to health, safety, security and environmental performance.

"More than 120 fertilizer sites across Europe operate continuously to ensure production. Our industry is committed to the highest standards of safety, security, health and environmental performance."

Jacob Hansen, Director General Fertilizers Europe

www.fertilizerseurope.com/productstewardship2021

"Product Stewardship Programme has become the international reference for the global fertilizer industry."

David Herrero Fuentes, Chairman, Technical Committee, Fertilizers Europe and COO Fertiberia

"We are mutually sharing information that leads to sustainable improvements of safety and security."

Radomir Věk, Vice-Chairman, Technical Committee, Fertilizers Europe and COO, Lovochemie

"The direct and close cooperation with our customers such as suppliers, distributors, end users and logistic providers is essential."

Peter Suba, Vice-Chairman Technical Committee, Fertilizers Europe, and Member of the Management Board Petrokemija