



Knowledge grows

Our Position On

EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy

The unwanted effects of agricultural activities on the Baltic region's water systems and climate can be mitigated through best agricultural practices and innovation.

Introduction and background information

Around 85 million people live in the Baltic Sea catchment area and are affected by the poor ecological status of the Baltic Sea. Today the Baltic Sea is considered to be one of the most polluted seas in the world.

The main issues are; eutrophication (mainly caused by nutrients flow from agriculture and municipal waste water), threats imposed by hazardous substances and risks related to maritime activities - such as oil spills.

Recognizing the combined challenges of creating regional growth and prosperity while addressing the environmental issues, the European Commission established its first comprehensive 'macro-region' strategy targeting the Baltic. Priority areas include saving the sea, connecting the countries and increasing prosperity.

One of the major goals of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy is to help restore the sea's environmental status.

Yara International's position

Yara would like to express the following key aspects of achieving this while being aligned with the goals of EUs Common Agricultural Policy - CAP:

A sustainable EU agriculture is the only long-term solution

Only a competitive, profitable and productive agricultural sector answering to the environmental concerns of society can be sustainable in the long run.

EU policy should promote, and financially encourage, best agricultural practices and, where necessary, institute further fertilization training and educational programs for farmers, in order to mitigate unwanted effects of farming.

The target set in the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region is to reduce the nutrient leakage to the water system to acceptable levels without reducing productivity of local agriculture. To reach these two paramount goals, restrictions alone cannot be

the solution. Yara sees a rigorous implementation of best agricultural practices as the right way forward, including:

1. Maintaining good soil structure
2. Assuring balanced crop nutrition
3. Selecting appropriate fertilizer
4. Tailoring fertilizer application to actual crop needs
5. Using placement fertilization and/or just-in-time application to ensure rapid nutrient uptake
6. Using precision farming tools
7. Promoting efficient manure management

Global food security is also a challenge for the EU and the Baltic region

Yara underlines the fundamental role that mineral fertilizers have for increasing world food production and adequately feeding the population. Producing more food per hectare of arable land in Europe will reduce the need for food and feed imports into Europe and therefore help preserve the environment, by not turning more forests or virgin land into agricultural land.

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The Baltic Sea region will play an increasingly important role in future food production because of climate change effects, e.g. longer growing seasons and warmer average temperatures.

Having in mind the challenge of global food supply, promoting best agricultural practices should be preferred to restrictions, which would hamper the productivity and competitiveness of the region's agriculture, and have damaging effects on the rural economies. Restrictions should only be introduced when no other solution can be found.

Promote R&D and innovation within agriculture

The technological aspects of agriculture are becoming increasingly important. The EU should support farmers who adopt new techniques to use water more efficiently, to improve nutrient use efficiency and to enhance nutrient uptake by plants, and thereby minimize environmental impact.

Through new technologies such as nitrogen sensors, farmers are able to conduct precision farming, i.e. applying the correct nutrients, the correct amount, at the correct time for optimal yield with minimal environmental impact.

Yara has developed several new innovations as solutions for the Baltic Sea eutrophication problem and is actively co-operating with a number of key organizations to communicate best fertilizing practices to advisors and farmers. The solutions include Yara N-Tester and Yara N-Sensor technology, ImageIT, P-Trap, crop knowledge and product portfolios adapted to the needs of Baltic region crops and soils.

Yara advocates public-private partnerships between the different players in the agricultural sector around the Baltic Sea to facilitate the introduction and implementation of such solutions.

Agriculture can mitigate climate change and reduce environmental impact

Agriculture plays a key role in mitigating climate change and must be seen as part of the solution. Therefore, Europe's CAP objectives of "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" for agriculture should be integrated into the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Emissions from agricultural soils in the EU have been steadily reduced since 1990, while food production has increased. The EU should introduce mechanisms that will encourage and reward farmers to adopt methods to further reduce leaching of nutrients and emission of greenhouse gases from agriculture. Introducing nutrient management systems is a first step towards this.

The use of nitrate-based fertilizers offers both significant agronomic and environmental advantages compared to other types of fertilizers. European-produced nitrate-based fertilizers have the lowest greenhouse gas-emissions per kg nitrogen and lower volatilization rates leading to much reduced ammonia emissions, compared to urea-based fertilizers. This is significant, not only from an environmental perspective but also from a public health perspective.

Yara promotes the use of mineral fertilizers with the lowest carbon footprint based on a Life Cycle Approach (LCA). All Yara-produced fertilizers sold in the Baltic region meet our Yara Nordic guarantee criteria of less than 3.6 kg CO₂ eqv. per kg N.

About Yara

Yara's knowledge, products and solutions grow farmers and industrial customers' businesses profitably and responsibly, while nurturing and protecting the earth's resources, food and environment.

Our fertilizers, crop nutrition programs and technologies increase yields, improve produce quality, and reduce environmental impact from agricultural practices. Our industrial and environmental solutions reduce emissions and improve air quality from industry and transportation, and serve as key ingredients in the production of a wide range of goods.

Founded in 1905 to solve emerging famine in Europe, Yara today has a global presence with more than 12,000 employees and sales to more than 150 countries. www.yara.com

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