

**Question for written answer E-002903/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Annika Bruna (ID), Maxette Pirbakas (NI), Elżbieta Kruk (ECR)

Subject: Getting farmers involved in the efforts to reduce nitrates by 2030

One of the European Green Deal's objectives, to improve the quality of water, is to reduce nitrates by 50% by 2030 – a goal that the soaring population, climate change and the war in Ukraine have made harder to achieve.

The main sources of nitrate emissions are manure and, more notably, nitrogen fertilisers, which are used to improve agricultural yields and are becoming more and more expensive.

There are a number of agroecological techniques that can help reduce the amount of fertiliser needed and limit nitrate pollution:

- legumes can be planted to maximise nitrogen fixation;
- service plants can be grown alongside cash crops or as intercrops to improve soil properties;
- in the same vein, cover crops can be planted in winter to use up nitrates not absorbed by main crops;
- animal husbandry can be integrated with crops, as the soil will benefit from the organic matter from the livestock.

Some of these techniques are deemed to be environmentally friendly, and are thus eligible for aid under the new common agricultural policy.

Can the Commission guarantee that farmers will actually receive these funds, so that they can implement these techniques without incurring additional costs?