

EN

E-002968/2022

Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.11.2022)

The surge of energy prices implies that the cost of fertilisers has increased¹. This price surge results in EU farmers ordering less fertilisers than usual. It is still premature to assess what will be the effect for the harvest and the income of farmers in 2023.

Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), farmers can be supported to implement practices to reduce and optimise the use of fertilisers. These measures are designed by the Member States considering their needs and include the use of nutrient management plans², more legumes in the crop rotation and partial substitution of mineral by organic fertilisers³. The Commission is revising the policy and priorities identified in its 2018 report on the development of plant proteins with the view to boosting their production, including the cultivation of leguminous crops. Under the CAP Member States may support the production of protein crops with voluntary coupled payments schemes. The support that can be provided under the CAP to organic farming⁴ also means a reduced demand for mineral fertilisers⁵.

The new EU Regulation on fertilising products⁶ makes it possible to market more organic fertilisers in the EU⁷. The Commission invests considerably in research and innovation projects⁸ to foster the fertiliser production in the EU and provide farmers suitable alternatives to mineral fertilisers and is preparing a Communication on fertilisers⁹, which will address the production and availability of fertilisers in the EU.

¹ On average in the EU market, nitrogen fertiliser price has increased 149% over the last year.

² The objective of nutrient management plans is to adapt the use of fertilisers, timing and amount, to the actual crop requirements.

³ The total amount of manure available at EU level is lower than crop nutrient requirements; other sources of nutrients than organic fertilisers like mineral fertiliser are necessary to replenish the soil.

⁴ The European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork strategy and the Biodiversity strategy have set a target of 25% of EU agricultural land under organic farming by 2030 (from 9.1% now) and a significant increase in organic aquaculture.

⁵ Mineral fertilisers may not be used in organic agriculture under normal circumstances.

⁶ Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 laying down rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003.

⁷ The new rules define the conditions under which companies producing and selling such fertilisers will need to comply with before affixing the CE mark.

⁸ For example: RENURE (JRC121636), RUSTICA, FERTIMANURE, Nutri2Cycle, LEX4BIO, B-Ferst or SEA2LAND

⁹ 'Communication of the Commission on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers', forthcoming