



The fertilizer industry calls on G8 governments to invest in increased agricultural productivity to protect food security

The fertilizer industry would like to congratulate the Italian Government for convening a special G8 Agriculture Summit. We would like to use this opportunity to present the views of one of the agricultural input industries on the global issues that will be covered during the meeting, particularly food security.

The global food crisis in 2008 put agriculture back at the top of policy agendas. This renewed focus is both welcome and necessary. During the past decade, global cereal consumption has surpassed demand during most of the campaigns, eroding stocks to their lowest levels in 30 to 40 years. However, until mid-2007 low prices for agricultural commodities prevailed, providing limited incentives to invest in enhanced productivity or to harness widespread efficiency gains in the global food production value chain.

The food crisis has once again drawn attention to the conundrum faced by so many smallholders in the world who, despite higher food and crop prices in 2008, could neither increase their incomes nor invest in inputs. While measures are required to provide food for the most vulnerable of those affected by soaring food prices, we also urgently need a concentrated, co-ordinated public-private effort across the food production value chain to achieve the level of reform necessary for sustainable agricultural growth and rural development for the millions of small-scale farmers in developing countries.

The fertilizer industry calls on G8 governments to:

- 1- Invest in higher agricultural productivity
- 2- Support farmers in becoming rural entrepreneurs
- 3- Implement policies to provide access to inputs

1- Productivity and sustainability should be considered part of the same equation: food security should not be obtained at the expense of environmental sustainability. Increasing yields on existing arable land contributes to food security, economic development and environmental protection by preventing further encroachment of forests or other natural ecosystems. The fertilizer industry promotes ecological intensification and conservation agriculture. We are committed to reducing the unwanted side effects of fertilizer use and to increasing farmers' productivity by

About fertilizers

It is estimated that 48 per cent of the world's food production results from the use of manufactured nitrogen fertilizers. According to the FAO, close to 1 billion people are suffering from low caloric intake at the current level of fertilization. Without fertilizers, an additional 2 billion people would suffer from hunger.

Fertilizers are part of the solution for increasing agricultural output, as seen in the Green Revolution that allowed South Asia to rid itself of famine.

The mission of the International Fertilizer Industry Association is to provide the right nutrients for soils to remain fertile, crops to grow bountifully, and people to eat enough food and healthy food. IFA represents some 525 members in about 85 countries. The global fertilizer industry produces some 170 million tonnes of crop nutrients a year.

enhancing nutrient use efficiency, in particular through the promotion of Fertilizer Best Management Practices and integrated crop management.

2- The majority of the world's farmers are net food buyers, and policymakers should assist in stimulating rural entrepreneurship. This means developing the food production value chain in a holistic manner by finding solutions to shortfalls in rural credit, harnessing transportation and port efficiencies, and linking farmers to markets where they can sell their produce. The fertilizer industry strongly supports bringing farmers back to the centre of policymaking, as part of the development of a co-ordinated international response to the continuing high incidence of hunger and malnutrition.

3- Farmers need access to quality inputs, such as fertilizers at affordable prices and at the right time. The fertilizer industry is participating in the development of a vibrant network of private sector agri-retailers, who can also disseminate information on good farming practices. "Smart" subsidies, provided in the form of vouchers that allow farmers to purchase fertilizers and other inputs through local retailers, support the private sector and stimulate sustainable development of the rural economy.

In this context, the fertilizer industry's priorities for action are:

- Engaging in public-private efforts to achieve sustainable growth across the wider food production value chain, especially in developing countries
- Optimizing existing capacity and investing in additional capacity and logistics in strategic areas, along agricultural development corridors
- Supporting investment in emerging economies where there is potential for fertilizer and food production

The fertilizer industry supports the position argued by scientists, farmers, and business and industry in the call to action, "Farming First". "Farming First" calls for a broad-based, knowledge-centred approach in order to increase agricultural output in a sustainable manner. It proposes action in six key areas:

- Safeguarding natural resources
- Sharing knowledge of best farming practices
- Building local access to finance and infrastructure
- Protecting harvests
- Enabling access to markets
- Prioritizing research imperatives

The International Fertilizer Industry Association has adopted food security and Africa's agricultural development as two of its priority topics. IFA's Africa Forum encourages the formation of public-private partnerships to improve the accessibility, availability and affordability of fertilizers. While Africa is often associated with low agricultural productivity and soil depletion, it is also a continent of opportunity. Current fertilizer use is far below the world average, and dramatic improvements need to be made. To realize Africa's potential will require much stronger efforts by the public-private sector. The fertilizer industry is prepared to take an active role in making this happen.

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For more information: Farming First www.farmingfirst.org

International Fertilizer Industry Association www.fertilizer.org/ifa/Home-Page/SUSTAINABILITY

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