

Fertilizer Industry Promotes Increased Productivity, Human Health and Water Management

Paris: 5 June 2009 – The International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) announced during its 77th Annual Conference in Shanghai the launch of two new programmes to complement its sustainable development strategy: a task force on **water management** and a global task force on **zinc deficiency** jointly with the [International Zinc Association \(IZA\)](#).

1225 persons representing 333 fertilizer companies from 72 countries attended IFA's conference. In his opening speech, IFA's outgoing President, Thorleif Enger, emphasized the fertilizer industry's contribution to increasing agricultural productivity sustainably and encouraged IFA member companies to join the Association's sustainability initiatives.

Last year's global food crisis stimulated renewed interest in the agricultural sector on the international policy agenda. IFA has been actively involved in a number of initiatives providing expertise and representing business and industry, such as:

- The FAO High-Level Meeting on Food Security,
- The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis,
- The FAO High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security.

On 14 April 2009, IFA issued [a call to the G8 Agriculture Ministers' Summit](#) for:

- 1- Investment in higher agricultural productivity
- 2- Support to farmers to become rural entrepreneurs
- 3- Implementation of policies to provide access to inputs

The role of inputs, particularly plant nutrients, is now being given central importance in most policy documents focusing on food security. The industry is also promoting internally the following priority actions to address food security:

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

In addition, IFA is one of the four founders of the ["Farming First"](#) coalition, which actively promotes sustainable agriculture. "Farming First" is a good example of innovative partnership, since it was designed by representatives of the world's farmers, scientists and business and supported by a number of national delegations. It demonstrates that productivity increases can be

achieved in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, inclusive of all agricultural production systems. The fertilizer industry wishes to lead in promoting sustainable agriculture. IFA is at the forefront of five significant initiatives that directly contribute to greater sustainability:

- **A Stewardship Programme** which concretely promotes the highest standards for responsible fertilizer production, workplace safety and health, the environmental impact of production, transportation and use, and waste management.
- **A Global Framework for Fertilizer Best Management Practices**, promoting the four Rs: the Right Product at the Right Time, at the Right Place and at the Right Rate.
- **A Task Force on Climate Change**. The fertilizer industry recognizes that it is a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. However, new technology is available to dramatically reduce these emissions through the use of catalysts and fertilizers can make a positive contribution to soil carbon sequestration and are therefore also part of the solution.
- **A Micronutrient Initiative**. Research demonstrates that agronomic biofortification, or micronutrient fertilization, not only helps crops fight against nutrient deficiencies; it also benefits people and livestock. IFA and the International Zinc Association (IZA) are cooperating in zinc fertilization, building on scientific breakthroughs demonstrated in Turkey, to address **zinc deficiency** in developing countries, one of the leading causes of illness and disease, particularly in children. The fertilizer industry participates in a long-term global effort to improve public health and to benefit millions of children worldwide.
- **Africa Forum**. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest agricultural productivity and the lowest fertilizer use rates in the world. IFA established the Africa Forum last year to raise awareness of the positive role fertilizers can play in Africa's development.

“The fertilizer industry is in a unique position to positively contribute to global challenges, such as food security, poverty alleviation, water conservation, clean energy production and climate change”, noted Mr Enger in his closing remarks.

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[The International Fertilizer Industry Association \(IFA\)](#) is a not-for-profit trade association representing the global fertilizer industry. IFA member companies represent all activities related to the production and distribution of every type of fertilizer, their raw materials and intermediates. IFA's membership also includes organizations involved in agronomic research and training. IFA has some 525 members in about 85 countries. The global fertilizer industry produces some 170 million tons of fertilizer nutrients annually. These are used in every corner of the globe to support sustainable agricultural production and food security. www.fertilizer.org

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