

Industry Position on Zero Hunger

The Issue

After a decades-long decline in world hunger, the numbers have been increasing since 2014 with almost 690 million people (8.9 percent of the world population) estimated to have been undernourished in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to aggravate this trend (source: SOFI, 2020).

Position / Key Messages

The fertilizer industry recognizes that the UN Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger cannot be achieved in isolation from other global goals. It involves sustainable resource management, climate change mitigation, and adaptation, biodiversity protection, and sustainable production and consumption systems. Free trade of agricultural goods, as well as the necessary infrastructure development for market access, are of critical importance, too.

To respond to the goals of food security and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction among others, the fertilizer industry recommends prioritizing sustainable intensification as one of the most resource-efficient solutions to optimize land use and avoid further deforestation.

The industry commits to the promotion and implementation of soil health and fertilizer best management practices. This includes the 4Rs (applying the right nutrient source, at the right rate, at the right time and in the right place) as key principles applied throughout the industry's businesses, supply chains and partnerships.

Based on comprehensive data analysis, the industry further recommends to double average fertilizer application in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 and triple it by 2040 to improve soil health and increase yields, to help feed the continent. In countries with well-advanced or excess fertilizer use, the industry is committed to help bring crop nutrient use efficiency, calculated as the proportion of nutrients from all sources that are removed by the harvested crop, to an average of 70 percent during the next two decades. This would contribute to minimizing environmental losses while securing yield increases sustainably.

The question of food security cannot be limited to yield increase—it needs to include quality crop for human nutrition. Better soil and plant health means better human health. The fertilizer industry recommends targeted fertilizer fortification to achieve enrichment (agronomic biofortification) of staple food crops with micronutrients that are essential for human health (e.g., zinc, selenium, iodine), as one of the most effective solutions to reduce micronutrient deficiencies. Government goals must include hidden hunger and outcomes for human nutrition and health to be effective. Plant nutrition must be an integral part of national food, nutrition and health policies.

Background

- Zero Hunger is goal 2 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Food security must consider dietary trends, urban population growth, market access and farming developments, in addition to agricultural production. The industry supports nutrition-sensitive farming strategies as part of a comprehensive approach to agriculture and food production.