

Commission's plan perpetuates EU's long-term fertiliser dependency

SAFE raises concerns about the European Commission's plan softening the rules on fertilizer use, which can compromise consumer protection and the future resilience of food production in the EU.

The plan will expand the maximum usage limit for fertilisers from animal effluents in so-called Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ), subject to a higher level of protection. The current limit is 170 kg of nitrogen per hectare per year.

Deputy Director Luigi Tozzi said: "The new rules for fertilisers from the processed manure will encourage a sharp increase in nitrogen-based fertilisers in areas that are already stressed due to nitrate contamination. This is problematic because nitrates will eventually leak into drinking water, entering the food chain directly or through livestock. The new limit foresees a 47% increase in the current limit for NVZ. This can seriously threaten the future productivity of these areas."

SAFE has recently raised additional concerns about the risks posed by microplastics contained in animal effluent at EFSA's emerging risks stakeholder group. These risks should be carefully considered.

SAFE believes that the best way to strengthen Europe's food sovereignty is to advance sustainable food production, through sufficient, sustained financial support.