



Newsletter of Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment (BFFE)

February 2020

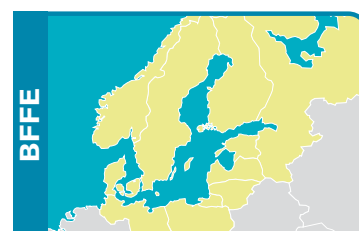
Third cycle of WFD and next CAP coincides

The expectations of many deliverables from the EU Rural development programme are high. From only an environmental point of view the RDP should deliver biological diversity, less nutrient leaching, less ammonia emissions, less pesticide residues and benefits for the climate. Besides that there are also funding for cultural heritage, infrastructure and increased social sustainability in the countryside.

In all countries preparation for the next CAP-period is ongoing. What has been functioning well in the present period and what should be changed? And how should we make priorities with a smaller budget? There are many considerations for the next period. From a healthy Baltic sea point of view it is noticeable that the next CAP-period coincides with the third cycle (2021-2027) of the EU Water Framework directive (WFD). Eutrophication is one of the top challenges in WFD and to tackle N and P leaching from food production is a major concern for governments in Europe. In many countries problems with nitrate in groundwater and eutrophicated streams and lakes calls for more measures than the funding within RDP allows. In practice it will be difficult to reach good ecological status until 2027 for lakes and streams discharging into the Baltic Sea, as in the rest of EU.

To gain as much environmental benefits as possible from RDP-measures maybe it is wise to give priority to measures that are as multipurpose as possible. Do the math and check if some measures on farms and fields ticks all the boxes for biological diversity, eutrophication, less acidification, less climate impact and are at the same time practical for farmers to manage. ■

Dr Markus Hoffmann
Secretary of BFFE
c/o Federation of Swedish Farmers
markus.hoffman@lrf.se



What is BFFE?

Baltic Farmers' Forum on Environment (BFFE) was launched in 1999 as an initiative from the Nordic Farmers Council. Presidents of farmers unions met in the island of Gotland, Sweden and signed a declaration under the auspices of the Swedish Environmental minister. The purpose is to strengthen the environmental work among farmers organisations and to represent farmers around the Baltic Sea as observers in HELCOM. Farmers unions in each of the eleven countries are members of BFFE.

Members of BFFE

1. Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF)
2. Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners in Finland (MTK)
3. The Central Union of Swedish-speaking Agricultural Producers in Finland (SLC)
4. Association of Private Family Farmers and Agricultural Cooperatives of Russia (AKKOR)
5. Estonian Farmers Federation (ETKL)
6. Latvian Farmers Federation (LZF)
7. Lithuanian Farmers Union (LUS)
8. National Union of Farmers and Agricultural Clubs and Organisations (KRZKIOR), Poland
9. Bauernverband Schleswig-Holstein (BVSH), Germany
10. Danish Agriculture and Food Council (L&F)
11. The Norwegian Farmers' Union (NFU)
12. Farmers Association of Iceland (Bondi)
13. Farmers Parliament (ZSA), Latvia
14. Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce

Who gets this newsletter?

The newsletter is distributed electronically to a variety of organisations in all countries around the Baltic Sea. Ministries, authorities, environmental organisations and farmers organisations are the main target group. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter or if you want to subscribe (for free) please send an email to markus.hoffman@lrf.se



Farmer Schlomo Gavie in the west of Sweden discusses measures with the two catchment officers Harald Lagerstedt and Lina Floer-Svensson.
Photo: Markus Hoffmann

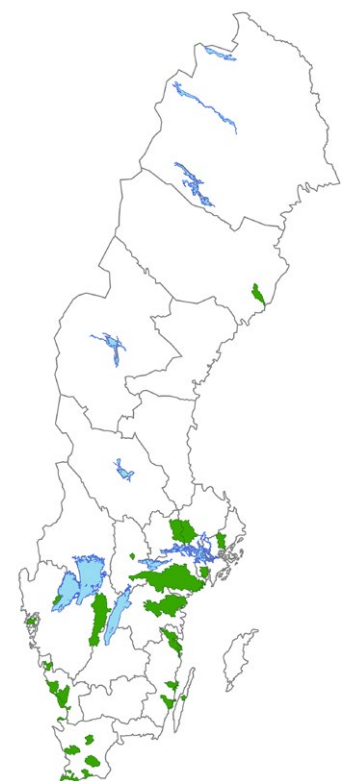
Local involvement for water on the rise

Lack of public participation in general and local involvement of farmers in particular makes the implementation of the EU Water Framework directive slow.

Time is running and almost 20 years have passed since the Water Framework directive (WFD) was launched. Still after almost a generation the amount of “extra” measures to combat eutrophication in agriculture because of the WFD are low. However, there is an everyday based pace of measures forced by legislation, and voluntary measures in the RDP. A major difference in the WFD compared to other EU directives is the thousands of locally distributed water quality goals for lakes and streams. Such local goals are not common in other directives. That is why commonly used centralized program of measures does not work very well in the case of the WFD. Instead local ecological knowledge from people that have been living for decades by lakes and streams must be used. Also the EU guidance

on public participation clearly promotes stakeholder involvement.

In Sweden a new approach is tested during the period 2018-2020 in the project *LEVA - Local involvement for water*. 20 persons have been employed to work full time in small catchments to promote local participation. The work is financed by the government and will be evaluated in 2020. It is a joint venture between the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Federation of Swedish farmers and the five regional water authorities. A clear objective is to prolong the project beyond 2020 since experience show that short term projects does not deliver enough use for eutrophication. The most important tasks for the 20 catchment officers are to:



Pilot-catchments for increased local involvement. Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management.

- Establish a local network of farmers and others in the catchment area
- Discuss what local measures is most suitable and how to promote them
- Assist contacts between farmers and authorities and to apply for funding for measures. ■

Horses and eutrophication

Can horsekeeping cause eutrophication? Yes, from heavy trampled pastures and from manure if it is not stored properly. This is the conclusion from Sweden where there now are more horses than milkcows.

Recent years horses have been identified as a risk for causing eutrophication. There are two different pathways for N and P from horsekeeping to water. The first is from soil erosion in pastures that has been heavy trampled by too many horses on a too small area. The erosion of nutrient enriched topsoil occurs mainly in wintertime. The solution to erosion might be to regularly clean the pasture from fresh manure to avoid accumulation of nutrients. Of course it would be better to distribute the horses on a larger area to avoid destroying the grassward. But the access to more land to the horses is often limiting this solution.

Manure from horse is usually less nutrient dense compared to manure

from pigs and cows and also often distributed on many small farms. Therefore it is not regarded as a valuable resource for cultivation but as seen as a disposal problem. In the

long term circular systems on local scale have to be developed where manure can be used for crops, for biogas or burned for energy.

Both the two sources described above are often concentrated to areas surrounding cities. People who own horses often live in cities but have horses on a farm close to the city. ■

Heavy trampled pasture with ongoing soil erosion.



Photo Markus Hoffmann

Make the most of manure!

Manure Standards project came to its end in December 2019. In a Baltic Sea region wide cooperation, the project succeeded in enhancing the capacity of farmers, advisors, authorities and policy-makers to manage manure more efficiently and sustainably. The significance of the project was highlighted at its best in improving the common understanding of the importance of equal methods for generating data on manure quantity and composition for uses on farms and in policies, and subsequently resulting in more comparable manure data between the BSR countries.

All results and publications of the project are available on the project website. Among other publications,



an easy-to-read guide for manure management as well as instructions for manure sampling are published on Manure Standards website. Both are especially targeted to farmers and advisors. Or do legislation and voluntary actions regulating manure fertilization in the Baltic Sea Region or nutrient balances interest you? The project has also reported on these issues.

The project's overall recommendations for manure management for both farmers and policy-makers are also published. Other reports include information on the experiences gained when testing the developed methods for manure data generation on pilot farms and the significance of manure data quality on practical manure management and the related environmental impacts and costs. Stay tuned for our final results by following our website and Twitter! ■

Manure Standards was funded by Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Manure Standards project

Sari Luostarinen, project coordinator
sari.luostarinen@luke.fi

Miitta Eronen, communications manager
miitta.eronen@luke.fi

The Swedish opinion on cadmium in fertilizers

Since European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has decreased the acceptable daily cadmium intake for humans to a third of the former value, we need to work more with cadmium in our soils and in our arable inputs.

For the farming community in Sweden with 30 years of intensive work with any possibility of decreasing the cadmium content in soils we have a split feeling towards the EU harmonisation aspect. We find the time schedule too slow for nations which have already decreased the cadmium level in all arable inputs. On the other hand, we can understand that there can be a market disturbance for low cadmium fertilizers.



In Sweden we prefer national derogation for limit values since we get the possibility of decreasing the cadmium levels in a speedier way. We still have problems with soils

high in natural cadmium levels and low in buffering capacity. This situation will remain for a longer period since we have a lot of cadmium in circulation on the farms. Therefore, we must continue our work. Our concern has increased towards the atmospheric deposition due to coal burning in Europe, which is a major input to Swedish soils now. The national authorities have started the work with a Cadmium Strategy, which includes Industrial Emission Directive and lowering the deposition. We haven't seen the result of the strategy work but expect it to be ambitious. ■

Text: Kjell Ivarsson, LRF, Sweden

Short notes



Photo: Peter Nolbrant

People taking interest in their local water.

WaterCo-governance

■ **The focus of the** Interreg Water Co-Governance for Sustainable Ecosystems project is to understand how the implementation of EU directives can be achieved at a local level in the North Sea Region. The projects' output aims for a change in working practice that will improve the

integration between top-down implementation of European and national directives and bottom-up, participatory developed solutions for improving the quality and sustainable management strategies of NSR ecosystems. Read more at: <https://northsearegion.eu/watercog/>

Controlled drainage

■ **A new field trial** of the effect of controlled drainage on nitrogen losses was performed on Jutland, Denmark. On four fieldplots of one hectare each a well was installed to regulate drainflow and to fluctuate the level of groundwater during wintertime. Both water discharge and nitrogen losses decreased when the drainage was controlled compared to free drainage. Despite that a N -isotope was used to track the fate nitrogen the scientists write that there remains uncertainties where the decreased waterdischarge went.



Photo: Markus Hoffmann

Drainage pipe in a newly maintained ditch.