



## Newsletter of Baltic Farmers Forum on Environment (BFFE)

January 2010

### Farming and Water Quality Management – 2010 will be an eventful year

**Whilst writing this** the most important decisions regarding water quality management within agriculture in the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea and other EU countries are being made. I'm thinking about the decision on the first planning cycle in the EU Water Framework Directive. A great deal of work has been done which is now seeing results through the decisions. And it has been a difficult task. Some of the questions remain unanswered, for example pricing policies for water used in agriculture. The extent to which the EU Commission will tolerate that this first cycle is a test round remains to be seen.

2010 will also be an important year for the Baltic Sea Action Plan. The ministers meet up again in May to present their countries' programmes on how the quotas in the agreement shall be reached. The quotas are still preliminary and a great deal is happening around auditing them. Many people are waiting expectantly to see how the countries' action programmes will look.

A Flagship Project proposal from the farmers' federations in Sweden, Finland, Germany and Denmark has been accepted as an integral part of the EU Baltic Sea Regional Strategy. Baltic-DEAL, as the project is nicknamed, seeks to minimise nutrient losses from farming activities through a major and Baltic region wide strengthening of agri-environmental advisory services.

At the same time it is time to start thinking about how the EU's rural development programme for the period 2014 – 2020 shall be drawn up in terms of financial support for measures for water quality management. During 2010 the time will be right to come up with ideas.

If you think that there is a lot going on then you are right, but it is probably just the start. As the main point sources, i.e. sewage treatment works, are remedied, an ever-increasing remaining part of the origins are down to agriculture. There is no technical quick fix for agriculture, as for sewage treatment works. Instead it is still a question of increased knowledge and dialogues with individual people. ■

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### 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 eight 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)
9. Bauernverband Schleswig-Holstein
10. Danish Agriculture
11. The Norwegian Farmers Union

### 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 [registrator@lrf.se](mailto:registrator@lrf.se)



# Polish efforts reduce agricultural point sources of eutrophication

**In Poland the striving to reduce nutrient leakage from agriculture has focused on manure storage facilities during the last ten years. Tadeusz and Anna Klepaczkas have been able to realize such an investment thanks to EU funding.**

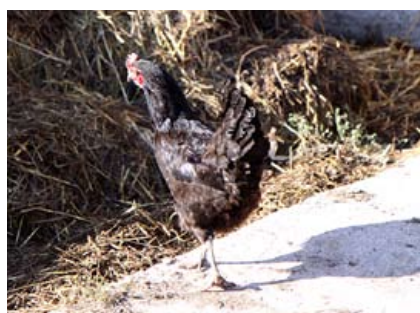
Text and photo: Monica Kling

**In many Polish farms** the manure is still stored directly on the ground or in manure pits that are not tight, and the small farms cannot afford the investments to raise the standards. It is therefore crucial to find financial support to realize manure storage facilities that can meet the demand of Good Agricultural Practice, GAP. Advisory services are also required to increase the environmental awareness of the farmers, who do not always see the importance of such achievements.

During the last ten years there have been two large manure storage projects in the country. In 1999 the first one started with national and international support which in three years led to the building of 950 storage facilities in chosen individual farms. Thereafter the Rural Environmental Protection project started in the Mazowie province and a total of 3193 manure pads

with containers were refunded in 2003-2006.

Via the rural development program EU funding is now the support available for investments to raise the standard of the manure storage capacity. Tadeusz and Anna Klepaczka in the Łódzkie province have built a manure pad for their 20 dairy cows and young cattle thanks to EU subsidies for the modernization of agriculture. They cultivate 25 hectares of land which is a large farm for Polish conditions as the mean size of the region is 8 ha.



A lot of farmers are expected to sell and leave their farms as another result of the modernization program, but this is a slow process and Tadeusz Klepaczka is optimistic regarding the future.

– We will survive, although there is a shortage of land in the region so it is not easy to expand if you want to, he says.

The situation of Tadeusz and Anna Klepaczka's farm is a good example of the ongoing trend in the rural areas of Poland, however not an average one. An anonymous survey in 2006 revealed that in the Podlaski province 81 percent of the liquid manure containers needed and 55 percent of the manure pads needed were lacking. Efforts are now focused on rural extension services programs to increase the awareness of environmental influence and knowledge about GAP among farmers. There are also environmental program subsidies other than the investment funds but they are too low to be tempting and farmers do not always see the importance of them.

– It is not of economically interest to get environmental subsidies. It is better and more profitably to produce, Tadeusz Klepaczka says. ■

# Baltic DEAL

## – Flagship project Proposal to EU

As a part of the EU Baltic Sea Regional Strategy a project proposal has been elaborated by Farmers federations in Sweden Finland, Denmark and Germany. It was handed to DG Region in Brussels in the beginning of December. The subtitle is “Putting best practices in agriculture into work”. It is inspired by and draws upon several national and international projects and programs.

The project objective is develop a common Baltic Sea region approach, with national adaptations, to advance

and strengthen agricultural advisory services and related demonstration and information-activities focusing upon improving environmental and agricultural practices. Based upon experiences from participating countries, this is a very cost-effective approach to improving agricultural practices and reducing on-farm nutrient losses. Furthermore, it is an approach with high acceptance within the farming community.

The project will be carried out as a four-year project (2010-2013),



primarily by national key actors in the area of agricultural advisory services, under the leadership of and in close co-operation with farmers' federations. In total, around 15-20 partners are envisaged. A budget of around 11.5 mEUR is envisaged as the total resource requirements. ■

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## Farmers and environmental experts in close cooperation in Finnish pilotproject



Eriika Lundström and Pasi Salmi from TEHO-project adjusting analysis instruments measuring water quality in a wetland. Photo: Airi Kulmala

**One of the largest** ongoing farming-projects to reduce eutrophication of the Baltic sea is a one in Finland. In two regions in the southwest of Finland a pilotproject has been launched aiming at reducing N and P loads by close cooperation with farmers. The name of the project is TEHO (Finnish abbrev.) and it is financed with about two million Euro by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture each. The project which runs from 2008 – 2010 is voluntary for farmers to participate and already 124

farmers have joined. There are a lot of ongoing activities and only to mention some of them, the key elements are:

- On-farm individual advisory service to farmers mapping current status of water and environmental management and stressing things well done.
- Promotion to use the existing EU agri-environmental support scheme.
- Intensive experiments for better use of manure such as separation and biogas etc.

- Stressing the importance to improve soil structure by applying gypsum and cultivating catchcrops.
- Monitoring instruments for continuous analysis on nitrogen in rivers has been installed.
- One of the goals is to develop a water-environment manual for farmers.

In December 2009 a mid-term report will be made and that report and the final report will certainly be of interest for many to read. ■

Coastal meadow in Mietoinen. Photo: Airi Kulmala



# Finland won the Baltic Sea Farmer award

**The Finnish farmers** Katariina Vapola and Jyrki Ankelo from Kalanti of Uusikaupunki were awarded the WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year prize. The national winners of eight countries was competing for the regional prize of 10 000 euro which is awarded to a farmer who has made innovative measures to reduce nutrient leakage to the Baltic Sea.

– It is a great honor to get this prize, and it strengthens our feelings for our work and what we try to accomplish, Katariina Vapola says.

The couple has an organic farm with beef cattle and has made several agri-environmental measures on the farm. A sedimentation pond and a constructed wetland receive the



Farmers Katariina Vapola and Jyrki Ankelo from Finland proud winners of 2009 WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year prize.

drainage water, and even the cattle exercise yard has a drainage system leading to the pond. The sediment of

the pond is reused as fertilizer and for soil improvement. Furthermore they renew the grassland by direct drilling instead of ploughing to reduce nutrient loss.

On the Vapola farm they also make nutrient balances and are involved in the TEHO project where farmers can get environmental advice and get the opportunity to measure nutrient concentrations in catchment waters. The prize was given at a ceremony of the Baltic Agreement conference in Riga on November 26 to which all the national winners were invited.

– Listening to the talks of the conference we can see that we are on the right track, Katariina Vapola says. ■

Text and photo: Monica Kling

## Useful news from research



Photo Erik Karlsson

### No phosphorus additives needed in cow feed

■ In a cow feeding conference in Uppsala, Sweden recently a new report was published. A new investigation on actual use of phosphorus (P) in cow feed indicated a overuse of P of about 27% for cows in a county in Sweden. The explanation for this is the high content of P in protein feed to cows. Rape-meal is a protein source rather used since it does not have to be imported and by that reduces emissions from transport. But it has a high P content which have to be carefully used. An ongoing Swedish research projects investigates the relationship between increased P in cowfeed and apportionment between organic and inorganic P in manure.

### New Norwegian P-index for farmers

■ The Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research – Bioforsk have launched a simple method for farmers to calculate risk for P-losses from arable land. By printing the field background data on soiltype, slope, precipitation and information on the most common cultivation methods as soil-tillage, croptype and so on a index indicating risk for P-losses is calculated. It also gives the possibility to try measures such as bufferzones and reduced tillage.



Photo Stöt Ulrika Andersson



Photo Monica Kling

### Danish cooling of pig manure shows promising results

■ Interest for cooling of manure increases. Danish results clearly demonstrates several advantages. In a trial with slaughter-pigs ammonia emissions was clearly reduced. Furthermore the air in the stable became better for both people and pigs. The energy being gained from the manure can be used to substitute heating with fossile fuels and thereby reduce emissions of climate gasses. Subsequently this is a measure that both reduces eutrophication and climate impact.