

WORLD FERTILISER DEMAND CONTINUES TO GROW

Outlook and trends highlight the challenges ahead for agriculture

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Here at RLF we have been keeping an eye on some of the major nutrient trends and other crop nutrition challenges for global agriculture.

We recently published Special Reports on [Zinc Deficiency Zones](#) (25th August 2015) and [Peak Phosphorous](#) (9th December 2015) and agree that understanding all of the issues surrounding global food security is a necessity for the agricultural industry world-wide.

NPK is the industry reference measure of fertiliser use and consumption.

However at Rural Liquid Fertilisers (RLF) our target is to achieve a 15% - 20% reduction in the use of granular NPK through the use of a program of liquid fertiliser trace element nutrition (together with seed priming) all integrated with farm practices. As demand places upward pressure on growers towards more efficient fertiliser practices in order to reduce input costs and generate higher yield, thereby improving economic performance, RLF believes that it can provide real solutions to this challenge.



'World Fertiliser Trends and Outlook to 2018' was released some months ago by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, and it is good to be reminded of the challenges that face all of us working to bring exceptional crop nutrition products to the market for the benefit of farmers and growers in all cropping environments.

Some of the significant points raised by the report state that :

- the world economy has broadly strengthened over the past three years and is expected to continue this strengthening trend
- an improvement in the global grain supply-demand balance in the 2014/15 marketing season was experienced, despite earlier beliefs that it may not be as buoyant
- world cereal production in 2014 is estimated to reach 2,498,000,000 tonnes, or 2.2% below that of the cereal production recorded in 2013
- world food prices have continued to ease
- world fertiliser nutrient ($N+P_2O_5+K_2O$) consumption is estimated to grow
- world demand for total fertiliser nutrients is estimated to grow at 1.8% per annum from 2014 to 2018
- the demand for nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium is expected to increase annually by 1.4%, 2.2% and 2.6% respectively during the same 2014 to 2018 period
- over the next five years the global capacity of fertiliser products, intermediates and raw materials will also further increase

This is compelling information and the report shown opposite can be accessed for a more detailed understanding.

[Click here to view this PDF](#)



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

World fertilizer trends and outlook to 2018

The following two tables from the FAO Report extrapolate this demand further.

Table 4. WORLD DEMAND FOR FERTILISER NUTRIENTS, 2014-2018 (thousand tonnes)

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Nitrogen (N)	113 147	115 100	116 514	117 953	119 418
Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅)	42 706	43 803	44 740	45 718	46 648
Potash (K ₂ O)	31 042	31 829	32 628	33 519	34 456
Total (N+ P₂O₅+K₂O)	186 895	190 732	193 882	197 190	200 522

- The global potential nitrogen balance (*i.e. the difference between N potentially available for fertiliser and N fertiliser demand*) is expected to steadily rise during the forecast period.
- The global potential balance of phosphorous is expected to rise from 2,700,000 tonnes in 2014 to 3,700,000 tonnes in 2018 – or from 6.4% of total demand to 8.5%.
- The global potential balance of potassium is also expected to rise significantly from 25% of total demand to 33%.

This chart maps the world and regional growth expected, and this is particularly important because it may impact on Australia's competitiveness as demand within the Asia/Oceania regions is expected to be high.

Table 5. WORLD AND REGIONAL GROWTH IN FERTILISER DEMAND, 2014 to 2018

Region	Annual growth rate (compound)			
	N	P ₂ O ₅	K ₂ O	Total (N+P ₂ O ₅ +K ₂ O)
World	1.4%	2.2%	2.6%	1.8%
Africa	3.2%	2.7%	7.8%	3.6%
North Africa	2.0%	3.2%	2.8%	2.3%
sub-Saharan Africa	4.6%	2.3%	9.4%	4.7%
Americas	1.6%	2.4%	2.0%	1.9%
North America	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Latin America & Caribbean	3.3%	3.6%	3.0%	3.3%
Asia	1.3%	2.2%	3.1%	1.7%
West Asia	2.1%	6.3%	4.0%	3.2%
South Asia	1.7%	3.6%	4.9%	2.4%
East Asia	1.0%	1.2%	2.6%	1.3%
Europe	1.1%	2.3%	2.1%	1.5%
Central Europe	1.7%	3.7%	3.1%	2.3%
West Europe	-0.3%	0.1%	0.8%	0.0%
East Europe & Central Asia	3.3%	4.5%	3.7%	3.6%
Oceania	1.2%	0.4%	0.9%	0.9%

Conclusion

Here at RLF we know that this isn't the full story about fertiliser demand and world growth trends.

It doesn't just stop at N, P and K. Trace elements and innovative modern-farming practices that support but reduce the important role of soil-based fertilisers all form part of the bigger picture too.

It is noted that as a base-line measure, the FAO Report continues to support the view of increased consumption of fertilisers in global farming practices. At RLF, we believe substantial inroads can be made into decreasing reliance on these precious fertiliser resources by making all the nutrient elements available for the crop by alternate means and methods.

The following two links will help understand this position in greater detail.

[What is Fertiliser Integration?](#)



[Foliar Fertiliser versus Soil Fertiliser](#)



RLF is committed to its continuing role in supplying exceptional and technically advanced liquid crop nutrition products to the market. It is also committed to continuing the dialogue about these important issues and never losing sight of the services it provides for customers.



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