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Mrs. Jessika Roswall
European Commissioner for Environment, Water Management and
Competitive Circular Economy
- This letter has been sent by e-mail -

Putten, 1 April 2026

Subject: Urgent Request Regarding Fertilizers Availability and Food Security

Dear Commissioner,

Agractie Nederland, which represents a large part of the Dutch agricultural sector and serves as a voice for farmers, submits this urgent request concerning fertilizers availability and food security. In the Netherlands, we have a saying: “necessity knows no law.” Given the current geopolitical developments, we believe such a situation has arisen.

Due to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, fertilizers prices have risen sharply, and availability is becoming increasingly limited. This creates a serious risk for the agricultural sector. With a potential shortage of fertilizers, both food and feed security are under pressure. Crops require sufficient nutrients during this crucial period of the growing season, yet stocks are declining while energy prices for fertilizers production are increasing significantly.

To mitigate the risk of food and feed shortages, we respectfully request temporary flexibility for farmers to substitute nitrogen from synthetic fertilizers with nitrogen from animal manure. We fully acknowledge that this request is not in line with the current Nitrates Directive. However, we believe that the present circumstances justify exceptional measures.

Moreover, we are convinced that such a measure could be environmentally beneficial. Research conducted by Wageningen University indicates that manure is less prone to leaching than synthetic fertilizers. Additionally, previous derogation practices have shown that water quality beneath farms



applying such measures was, in many cases, better than on farms that did not.

It is also well established that the production of synthetic fertilizers generates significantly higher CO₂ emissions compared to the use of existing manure. From the perspective of Dutch farmers, it is increasingly difficult to justify paying high costs both for manure disposal and for purchasing expensive fertilizers. This situation is becoming unsustainable and may lead to societal unrest.

We are addressing this letter to you directly, as the Nitrates Directive falls under European jurisdiction. This issue is not limited to the Netherlands alone, and timely decision-making is essential to ensure effectiveness during the current growing season.

We kindly urge you to consider this request with the utmost urgency. In this respect a decision is needed within 4 weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Erik Luiten

Chairman Agractie Nederland

Cc:

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

Commissioner for Agriculture and Nutrition, Christophe Hansen

Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, Vincent Karremans

Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature, Jaimi van Essen