

Industrial Pollution

Published: 05.04.2020.

Territory of Latvia covers more than 6.4 million ha. Forests dominate in the land use (44 %), followed by agricultural land (39%) and urban areas and infrastructure (10 %).

Agriculture is still responsible for high nitrogen and phosphorus loads to water bodies and the Baltic Sea. Soil degradation processes are increasing where the reasons are high acidity, low level of organic matter and plant nutrients, due to the lack of manure and homogeneous crop rotation. It is also characteristic that numbers of agricultural lands are abandoned, that also facilitates above-mentioned problems. However the negative agricultural impact to the environment is still low as compared to main part of Europe.

To promote development of agriculture including environmental protection issues, Latvia Government has worked out and approved different kinds of National Programs.

According to the Law on Pollution (adopted on 1 July 2001) (implementation of Council Directive 96/61/EC) several regulations has been adopted:

- Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No.531 adopted on 18 December 2001 "[Regulations on the protection of waters and soil against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources](#)" (Council Directive 91/676/EEC)
- Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No.362 adopted on 2 May 2006 "[Regulations Regarding Utilisation, Monitoring and Control of Sewage Sludge and the Compost thereof](#)" (Council Directive 86/278/EEC)

According to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No.531 adopted on 18 December 2001 "Regulations on the protection of waters and soil against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources", the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment developed [the Action Programme to protect water and soil against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources](#), adopted on 18th March 2004.

Since year 1994 Latvia is a Part of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (Helsinki, 1974, 1992). The objective of this Convention is protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area.

To decrease the negative influence of farming on the environment and to prevent the impoverishment and irrational use of the main nature resources - soil, water, plants, animals, and landscape Latvia has developed Code of Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) ([I part](#), [II part](#)). The Code of Good Agricultural Practice contains legislation obligations, recommendations and practical advice envisaged for farmers, horticulturists, individual growers, agriculture service employees and for everyone who is involved in agricultural production and preservation of rural environment. It is recommended to follow the rules accepted in Europe and in other developed countries. GAP comprises main spheres of agricultural activities that are critical in causing water, air, and soil pollution. It gives advice for the prevention or at least for the decrease of pollution. A successful implementation of GAP has to be based on three integrated basic principles: economically viable, environmentally friendly, and socially acceptable. The goal to establish GAP Code for each country is determined by the Nitrate Directive of the European Union (EEC/91/676). Helsinki Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM) calls for a prompt action in Latvia that would decrease the negative influence of agriculture on the environment. Thus, the development of GAP Code is a part of the harmonization of the Latvian legislation with both the EU legislation and HELCOM recommendations.

Since year 1994 Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment organize competition for Latvian farmers "Sējējs".

Internet home pages:

Ministry of Agriculture home page: <http://www.zm.gov.lv>

Helsinki Convention Home page: <http://www.helcom.fi>

<https://www.varam.gov.lv/en/industrial-pollution>