

Cadmium limits in phosphorus fertilizers

Soil contamination is a significant threat to soil health and fertility. It affects the quality of food, water, air and poses a threat to the environment and human health.

What is cadmium?



Cd
Cadmium

Cadmium (Cd) is a heavy metal that accumulates in soil and living organisms and causes severe and permanent damage to them. The presence of cadmium in soils depends largely on the use of phosphate fertilizers. Once crops absorb **Cadmium through fertilizers, it enters the food chain.**



In Europe and Eurasia, soil pollution is the third most relevant environmental threat. Copper (used as a plant protection product) and Cadmium (associated with phosphate fertilizers) are the most common and widespread contaminants in European agricultural soils.

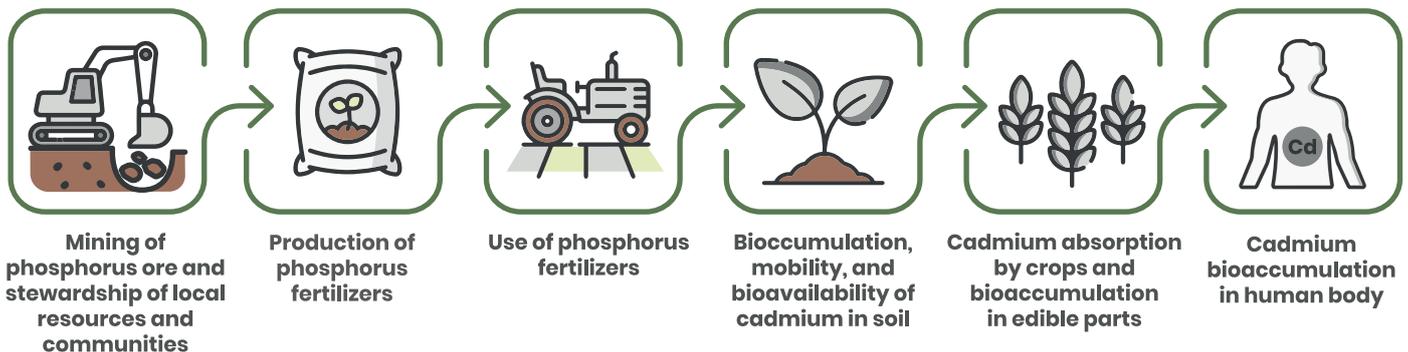


Food is the primary source of cadmium exposure, with **cereals, nuts and legumes, starchy roots, potatoes, and meat** being the major contributors.



Progressive accumulation of Cd in humans **impairs kidney function, affects the liver, and causes bone demineralization.**

Life cycle of Cadmium in phosphorus fertilizers



What is being done?

The European Union will ban the commercialization of phosphate fertilizers with a content of **more than 60 mg of Cadmium per kg in July 2022.**

Fertilizers with low Cadmium content (no higher than 20 mg/kg) would be more powerful in limiting the process of contaminants entering the food.



This is not enough. What needs to be done?

- 1 Introducing the harmonized European 'tolerance threshold' for Cadmium at the lowest possible level (20mg/kg)**
- 2 Introducing clear labelling for phosphorus fertilizers**
- 3 Stimulating farmers to use lower Cadmium fertilizers through CAP subsidies, education and other incentives**
- 4 Creating an environment that allows adjacent sectors to contribute to continuous improvements through voluntary measures**
- 5 Expanding and harmonizing soil and water monitoring systems in Europe**