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SUMMARY

NUTRITION MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

Document submitted by the United Kingdom Ministry of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food

The United Kingdom has agreed to take the lead on the development of nutrient management indicators within the OECD work programme on environmental indicators for agriculture. Nutrient management forms part of the category "farm management", the other aspects being pest, soil, irrigation and whole farm management.

It is unlikely that a single indicator will be able to capture the different effects of nutrient management as well as the different implications for different countries. Many individual farm and field level decisions by the farmer influence nutrient loss. Further, these decisions are often specific to the individual nutrient. Moreover, there are wide national differences in the importance attached to nutrient loss and in resulting national policies.

The United Kingdom concludes that it may not be realistic or appropriate to expect OECD countries with widely differing environmental concerns to adopt exactly the same set of nutrient management indicators. Therefore, the United Kingdom proposes a range of indicators from which countries could select according to their own conditions and circumstances. The proposed indicators are:

- The proportion of agricultural land which is regularly sampled and analysed for phosphorus content.
- Use of a nutrient management plan on the farm.
- Area of agricultural land in Government and other land management schemes which require less than normally recommended nutrient inputs.
- Timing of slurry application or months of available storage on the farm.
- Types of machinery or techniques used to apply manure and slurry to land which reduce polluting emissions.

Few data are available across OECD countries to calculate these indicators. However, increasingly, the importance of management practices is being recognised in the development of national and international policies to control nutrient losses. These policies will require reliable time series data to enable them to be monitored and evaluated effectively.