

# Study reveals cost of nitrogen pollution

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A farmer drives a tractor near Feldkirchen in southern Germany. Nitrogen pollution costs Europe between 70 and 320 billion euros (\$100bn-\$460bn) per year in its impact on health and the environment, according to a major European study launched in Britain on Monday.

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The first European Nitrogen Assessment, the result of a five-year research programme, found that the costs represented more than double the benefits for the continent's agriculture sector.

The ENA was to be launched Monday at a five-day international conference in Edinburgh.

The study was carried out by 200 experts from 21 countries and 89 organisations, who came up with recommendations on how to reduce the amount of nitrogen in water, the air, the earth and ecosystems.

The invention of synthetic fertiliser in the early 20th century revolutionised agriculture, multiplying yields and improving quality.

However, the amount of nitrogen in the environment has doubled on the world level, and tripled in Europe.

ENA coordinator Mark Sutton said: "More than half the world's population relies on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser for food production, but measures are necessary to reduce the impact of nitrogen pollution.

"The solutions include more efficient usage of mineral and organic fertiliser (manure, liquid manure and [compost](#)) and [eating habits](#) aimed at more moderate [meat consumption](#).

"We have the know-how to reduce [nitrogen pollution](#), but we must start applying these solutions at the European level in an integrated way."

The event in the Scottish capital will bring together scientists and policy makers to launch the ENA and discuss the latest scientific progress on nitrogen.

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