

Issue 6/2021

Nitrates Pollution from Agriculture

Agricultural pollution continues to be one of the major sources of pollution of European waters. Latest Commission report published in October 2021



Photo: Matthias Wild, Augsburg Allgemeine

The implementation and enforcement of the Nitrates Directive has cut off nutrient losses from agriculture over the last 30 years. Evidence allows to conclude that without the Directive the levels of water pollution in the EU would be significantly higher. The data on nitrates concentration at EU level show that groundwater quality has improved since the adoption of the Directive, however the further improvement goes very slow since 2012. This can be interpreted as the low hanging fruits having been already collected and now more far reaching measures being needed to improve the positive trend. Nevertheless, a high percentage of groundwater monitoring stations still show levels that are above the maximum 50 mg nitrate/l in Malta, Germany, Luxemburg, Spain, Portugal and Belgium (Flanders region).

EWA NEWS provide you an overview, links to the full reports at European level, as well as to the individual country reports.