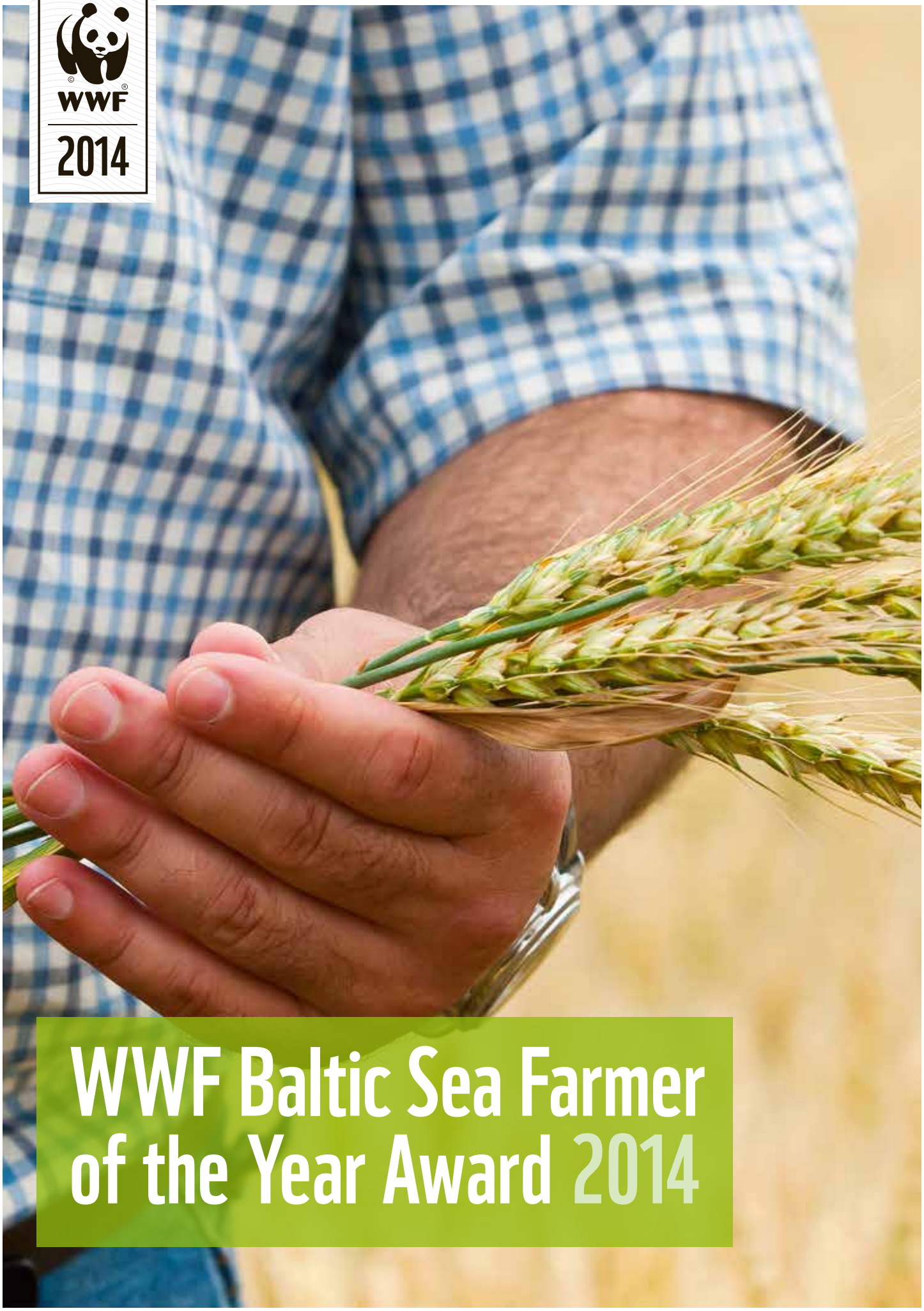

WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award 2014

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

WWF BALTIC ECOREGION PROGRAMME

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WWF BALTIC SEA FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2014

Design and production: Odelius & CO 14-3816, 2014

FARMERS WHO ARE LEADING THE WAY

Many farmers are prepared to go the extra mile in order to help save the Baltic Sea. The winners of the WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award 2014 have all taken measures on their own initiative to reduce nutrient runoff to the Baltic Sea and achieve sustainable farming. With this award, WWF aims to highlight how important their work is and showcase their good examples across the region.

The Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted seas in the world – with the single biggest problem being eutrophication, or over-fertilization, caused by an excess of nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen. This excess leads to a severe disruption of the Baltic Sea ecosystem, with effects including increasing bottom areas with no oxygen and extensive algal blooms in summertime. Farmers are often criticized for these problems given that agricultural activities account for almost half of the nitrogen and phosphorous input to the sea. But, as the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award shows, many farmers are taking active steps to reduce their runoff and thereby help save the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award was first introduced as a way to inspire farmers and decision makers in the agricultural sector by highlighting concrete examples of all the positive things that farmers are doing around the Baltic Sea. The competition is now in its fifth year and has grown to receive stronger interest from farmers every year.

"Each year we have seen the popularity of the competition increase among farmers in Poland, and also the farmers' awareness of their impact on the Baltic Sea," says Marta Kalinowska at WWF Poland and member of the Polish national jury. "We are also happy to see the competition gaining popularity among different stakeholders. This year, the Polish jury included high-level representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment for the first time."

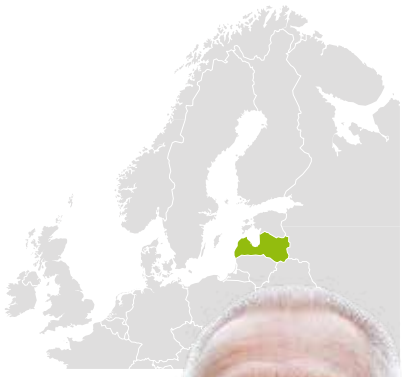
The competition has been held in all nine countries around the Baltic Sea: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. A national award has been presented to one farmer in each of the participating countries, and an international jury has selected the regional winner who receives a prize of 10,000 Euros.

On the following pages you will have the chance to meet the winners of the 2014 competition and learn more about how they are collectively making a difference for the Baltic Sea – please read on and be inspired!

Last year's winner: Juhan Särgava, Estonia

Last year's winner of the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award, organic dairy farmer Juhan Särgava from Estonia, was awarded for his success in demonstrating how a large scale organic farm can use innovative, diverse and cost effective methods to reduce nutrient runoff, while producing high quality organic dairy products.

LATVIA Juris Cīrulis & Vija Cīrule



"The demand for ecologically produced food is growing, and I think that farmers are now looking for new technologies that can help them operate in a more sustainable way," says regional winner Juris Cīrulis.

Over the past 20 years, Mežacīruļi farm has grown from a mere 7 hectares with about 30 animals, to an impressive 700 hectares with 300 dairy cows. Still, farm owners Juris Cīrulis and Vija Cīrule have stayed true to their core belief that farmers should take ownership of the negative effects their agricultural practices have on nature, and take every measure to prevent them.

"Mežacīruļi farm has for a number of years continuously implemented specific environmental protection measures as a 'moral duty' to nature and society," says Juris. "Farmers themselves have to acknowledge their impact on the environment, and develop food safety and environmental aspects of the production cycle in unison, as an important social responsibility."

At the farm, resources are used and reused to their full potential in a thoughtfully developed production cycle. Manure from the dairy cows is recycled in a biogas station that produces electricity and heat, and also valuable by-products such as fertilizer for the crops. Available technology is effectively used to make every stage of the production cycle environmentally friendly, while at the same time profitable.

"The manure is processed into biogas and the heat cogeneration is used for greenhouses, where salads, cucumbers and other vegetables are grown with organic methods," explains Juris. "As a result, a structural economic chain is formed, where each link is a logical complement to each other, and each link provides added value."

In addition, Mežacīruļi farm has created wetlands, settling ponds and buffer strips along watercourses. Recently, they have started a project on wetlands at the inlet of Eglons stream, in collaboration with Pasaules Dabas Fonds and Latvia University of Agriculture. The goal is to be able to draw conclusions about the impact of agriculture on the water and to find and test new technological solutions that are not in conflict with the needs of the farmers.

Juris and Vija are keen to pass on their knowledge and experience to everyone interested and welcome visitors including farmers, students and researchers at their farm. They believe that it is important to inform farmers so that they become aware of their impact on the environment.

Manure from the dairy cows is recycled in a biogas station that produces electricity and heat.

The manure is processed into biogas and the heat cogeneration is used for greenhouses, where salads, cucumbers and other vegetables are grown with organic methods. In addition, Mežacīruļi farm has created wetlands, settling ponds and buffer strips along watercourses.

"I am constantly trying to share my knowledge and experience. My farm is always open to local farmers who want to see how modern technologies can be used not only to make farming more effective, but also more sustainable and eco-friendly."

Juris Cīrulis & Vija Cīrule

Location: Zaļenieku Parish in southern Latvia

Type of farm: Conventional dairy and crop farm (700 hectares)

Main production: Milk (from 300 cows) and crops including cereals, sweet corn and grass

International Jury motivation:
The International Jury is proud to present the Regional Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award 2014 to Juris Cīrulis and Vija Cīrule for purposefully developing their farm Mežacīruļi to reduce nutrient runoff to the local and regional environment, including the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea. The production cycle at the farm is well-balanced and resources as well as by-products are thoughtfully used and reused, for example through a biogas station that recycles manure from the dairy cows. A growing chain of products are created and the negative impact on the environment is substantially reduced.

Furthermore, the Jury was impressed with the farm's construction of wetlands to accumulate and store nutrients on their farmland. Juris Cīrulis and Vija Cīrule welcome visitors including farmers, students and researchers at their farm and promote their approaches via a well-designed website. As such, they are excellent ambassadors for environmentally conscious farming. The Jury is delighted to acknowledge them with this award and hope that their positive example will provide inspiration for other farmers across the Baltic Sea region.

Key practices: Efficient use and reuse of resources and nutrients through a biogas station, residue from dairy production used as nutrition for cattle, wetlands, buffer zones, sedimentation ponds, preserving trees and bushes in the farm fields.

DENMARK Hanne & Knud Erik Clausen

"For us, it is important to document and show others that conventional farming can be done with a minimal impact on the environment," say Danish winners Hanne and Knud Erik Clausen.

Hanne and Knud are both agronomists and passionate about nature. They started farming in 1981 and for many years they have worked with different measures to help reduce the farm's negative impact on the surrounding environment. These measures include using catch crops and grass borders along their fields to minimize nutrient runoff, and also environmental accounting that allows them to carefully monitor the nutrient balances on the farm.

"In the last 12 years, we have made a 'Green Account' calculation on the farm, following the scheme made available by The Knowledge Centre for Agriculture in Aarhus," says Knud. "This has been a helpful in getting an overview on the inputs used, such as nutrients and crop protection agents. We have also put much emphasis on the possibility to show the surrounding world that a traditionally operated farm can be run sustainably with low impact on the environment."

Furthermore, the couple has made efforts to promote wildlife in their local area. On the farmland they have created unique biotopes by preserving mature trees, forest areas and hedges strategically close to water areas. They have also created nature trails that cross the farmland and surround the nearby Lake Maribo, something that has benefited many people from the nearby city and neighborhood. They hope that the award can inspire other farmers and help spread the knowledge on green methods in agricultural practices.

> *"The Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year competition helps to put focus on the subject, and by doing so, it can encourage other farmers."*

"The Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year competition helps to put focus on the subject, and by doing so, it can encourage other farmers," says Knud. "For us personally, winning the award is a confirmation that we are on the right path, and it will stimulate us to continue to do further work in this area. It will certainly strengthen our commitment," he concludes.

Hanne & Knud Erik Clausen

Location: Maribo on the island of Lolland in southern Denmark

Type of farm: Conventional crop farm (444 hectares)

Main production: Sugar beets, malting barley, peas, winter wheat and barley

National Jury motivation:
Hanne and Knud Erik Clausen have worked with many different environmental measures at their farm for a long time. Since 1999, they are able to follow the exact nutrient balance of their farm through environmental accounting, and have established 20 hectares of buffer zones to preserve and promote wildlife. Furthermore, they have created nature trails all the way around Lake Maribo for the benefit of people in the local area. Hanne and Knud Erik Clausen have succeeded in combining professional and sustainable farming with nature conservation. The Danish jury finds them inspirational to other farmers in the region.

Key practices: Monitoring of nutrient balances, grass and buffer zones, preserving natural landscape elements in farmland, establishing nature trails and forest areas.

ESTONIA Aivar Pikkmets

By selling their milk from dispensers across Estonia, Mätiku farm makes organic milk available to more consumers while at the same time saving valuable resources.

Mätiku farm, established as a family farm in 1991, has made many efforts to operate in a more environmentally friendly way. Aivar Pikkmets decided to run the farm using organic and sustainable methods because he wants everyone, including himself and his many children and grandchildren, to live in a healthy environment.

In addition to the organic farm measures, Mätiku farm has established buffer zones close to watercourses and vegetated strips between the fields, both reducing nutrient runoff while providing natural habitats for pollinators and predators controlling pests. Another measure is letting the cattle graze on wooded pastures in a nearby Natura 2000 site, which helps to preserve these unique habitats.

"The semi-natural wooded pastures are important because almost no nutrient runoff occurs there, and in some cases they can even act as nutrient sinks," says Aivar Pikkmets. "And, of course, they are also important for preserving biodiversity."

By setting up a system of milk vending machines in supermarkets across the country, Mätiku farm has made an effort to make organic products available to more people. This is an innovative approach in Estonia since there are few organic milk farms selling their product in supermarkets.

By setting up a system of milk vending machines in supermarkets across the country, Mätiku farm has made organic milk available to more people.

The farm is often mentioned as a positive example of organic farming in Estonia. It was a so called model farm in the EU project Baltic Deal, aimed at raising farmers' competence in efficient water and nutrient usage. Also, tours of the farm are often organized for farmers and other interested parties. Aivar believes that this is a good way to exchange experiences and learn from each other.

> *"It would be a good idea to have more students visit organic farms, to teach them why organic farming is important. This could also be an opportunity to teach them about the environment."*

Aivar Pikkmets

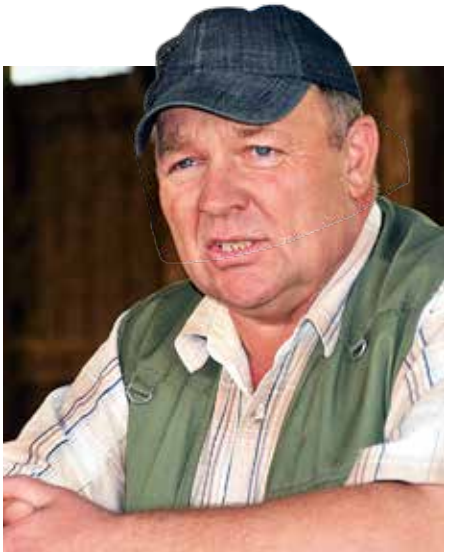
Location: Oidrema village in eastern Estonia

Type of farm: Organic dairy and crop farm (470 hectares)

Main production: Milk (from 50 cows) and crops to feed the cattle

National Jury motivation:
The Estonian jury chose Aivar Pikkmets as their winner based on his consistent and natural organic farming methods. He farms in an environmentally friendly way and uses innovative methods to reduce the nutrient runoff, support organic production and preserve biodiversity.

Key practices: Manure used as a natural fertilizer, buffer zones, precision agriculture equipment, wooded pastures, vegetation strips between fields.



FINLAND Fredrik & Helena von Limburg Stirum

At Kosken Kartano farm, a comprehensive approach to nature conservation is taken, working not only to reduce nutrient losses but also to preserve forest and other natural habitats.

Fredrik and Helena von Limburg Stirum run the organic farm Kosken Kartano, located in southwestern Finland. Their main focus on the farm is beef production, but they also grow crops like rye, wheat, rapeseed, oats and barley on 200 hectares of their land. The Baltic Sea and water protection are subjects very close to their hearts, as well as biodiversity and landscape conservation.

"Our Hereford cows do the most important nature conservation work on the farm. They graze the land which is good for biodiversity, and help different insects and plants to flourish on our farm. They also keep the landscape open and take care of the meadows, river banks and woodlands," says Fredrik.

To reduce nutrient losses from the farm they have established 9 wetlands, large buffer zones along the river and 80 hectares of natural fields left for pasture. In addition, the von Limburg Stirums have over a 1 000 hectares of forest on their land and they are ensuring it is managed sustainably – in 2013 they became the first private forest owners in Finland with an FSC certificate.

"When it comes to nature conservation it is important to have a comprehensive approach. We take the environment into account in everything we do," says Fredrik.

The von Limburg Stirums have actively invited people to their farm to share their experiences in water and landscape conservation, biodiversity and organic farming. In addition to invited guests, both domestic and foreign groups have contacted and also visited the farm over the last few years to get acquainted with the farm's activities.

"It is important for farmers to learn about good practices in environmentally friendly farming and actively search for new solutions to reduce the detrimental environmental effects. That is how you create environmentally friendly farming."

Fredrik & Helena von Limburg Stirum

Location: Koski village in southwestern Finland

Type of farm: Organic cattle and crop farm (1 500 hectares)

Main production: Beef (from 100 Herefords) and crops including rye, wheat, rapeseed and oats

National Jury motivation:
Fredrik and Helena von Limburg Stirum are actively promoting conservation of the Baltic Sea and are great ambassadors for Baltic Sea friendly agriculture. Their efforts to reduce nutrient emissions from their organic farm are significant and include establishing protection zones, 9 wetlands and increasing plant coverage during winter. The couple provides a good example of how to run a profitable farm while still focusing on the environment. They are also keen to make their farm even more environmentally friendly in the future, for example by using alternative sources of energy at the farm.

Key practices: Wetlands and protection zones, increased plant cover during winter, preserving forest and natural meadows, extensive grassland production.

GERMANY Frank & Kathrin Schumacher

"I didn't think that we would have any chance to win this award, as conventional farmers. Therefore, I'm all the more delighted that our work in different areas is being valued," says German winner Frank Schumacher.

The Radlandsichten holding has been farmed by the Schumacher family for more than 200 years, and is situated in the hill country of the Holstein Switzerland Nature Park. After completing his studies in agricultural science, Frank Schumacher took over the farm from his father to continue the long history of optimizing farm measures to benefit the surrounding nature.

One of the measures taken at the farm is the continued implementation of nutrient management measures. As one example, they voluntarily participate in a multiannual farm analysis of nutrient balances using a system of criteria for sustainable farming. This has resulted not only in reduced fertilizer use but has also increased the yields.

"From the data we could see in which areas improvements could be made and how to achieve them, especially with regards to nutrient supply. This has been of benefit to both the environment and our farm," says Frank. "Also, we liked the idea of having firm numbers at hand when faced with general criticism of the farming sector."

The farm is open to new approaches and cooperates with universities, government projects and other farmers – all with the goal of protecting water and biodiversity. The farm voluntarily participated in the EU projects Baltic Compass and Baltic Compact, aimed at finding innovative solutions for reducing the nutrient load reaching the Baltic Sea. They have also worked together with the Department of Hydrology at Kiel University to test the water from the farm's drainage system for nutrients. Based on the results they are now planning further measures such as controlled drainage, drainage collection ponds and targeted use of plants for nutrient removal from watercourses.

"It has been very important for me to engage with others and hear their opinions and points of view. It's quite easy to develop a tunnel vision when working alone on one's holding. It's important to always be open to new ideas."

Frank & Kathrin Schumacher

Location: Malente in northern Germany

Type of farm: Conventional crop farm (330 hectares)

Main production: Sugar beets, wheat, barley and peas

National Jury motivation:
The German jury was particularly impressed with the Schumacher's extraordinary efforts to improve water quality in the catchment area of a small local river, and by their continued implementation of nutrient management measures. The family farm is characterized by openness to new approaches, strong local networking, and a commitment to continuous improvement – and the couple's voluntary engagement to protect the Baltic Sea won over the jury. Furthermore, the farm impressively demonstrates initiatives for water quality protection and has taken on the challenge of seizing every opportunity to run a non-organic tillage, resulting in reduced nutrient losses and, at the same time, higher yields.

Key practices: Precision agriculture methods, monitoring of nutrients and fertilizer use, establishment of wetlands, increased green cover, nitrogen-fixing plants.

LITHUANIA Laura Mišeikienė

Laura Mišeikienė's farm is situated in a sensitive area with recurring floods. Preventing nutrient runoff to the surrounding waters is crucial – and also a priority for Laura.

The flooding in the area is further complicated by the water going straight to the Nemunas River, which meets the Curonian Lagoon and Baltic Sea after just 60 km.

"Farming in a flooded area is not easy and means a huge responsibility – if we don't prevent the nutrient leakage from the farm, it will reach the Baltic Sea in just a couple of days," says Laura. "But, it's also rewarding to have such a wonderful landscape around us."

Laura started with nothing but a wish to live surrounded by nature and has now evolved into an experienced adviser for many beginners in raising beef cattle on natural grasslands. She is one of the most active members of the Lithuanian Beef Cattle Breeders Association and through this network she is able to help spread knowledge about sustainable farming methods.

"I really loved living in the city and had a good job there, but I always felt the need to be closer to nature and do something to protect it. Farming was never my dream but after trying some great steaks abroad, I became obsessed with the idea to start a beef cattle farm. My family supported my idea and they are still a great support to me," says Laura.

In addition to using natural grasslands for grazing, the barn has a solid foundation and deep-straw bedding – both preventing leakage from the manure and urine. Last year she bought her first tractor and plans to increase the number of cattle from 33 to 45 by next spring. She believes her way of sustainable farming can be an attractive alternative lifestyle for other young families.

"I already know several wonderful and really dedicated young families, who started their farms on a very small scale," she says. "Maybe they can't create as big of a difference for the environment as a large scale farmer, but as this alternative lifestyle is becoming a new trend, I believe that even small family farms can make a difference."

Laura Mišeikienė

Location: Nausėdai village in southeastern Lithuania

Type of farm: Certified organic cattle farm (60 hectares)

Main production: Beef (from 30 cattle)

National Jury motivation:
The Lithuanian jury chose Laura Mišeikienė as their winner for inspiring other farmers to choose a sustainable way of farming, and for her dedicated commitment to reduce the potential negative impact of her farming. By developing her farm in a very sensitive flooded area, Laura has proved that natural constraints are not an excuse for unsustainable farming, but rather an incentive to look for alternative sustainable ways. Laura is a very enthusiastic, young farmer who sets a good example for other young farmers interested in protecting unique nature and landscapes. The jury is delighted to acknowledge her with the award and hopes that she will inspire other farmers across the country to develop their farms in a Baltic Sea friendly way.

Key practices: Permanent grasslands and semi-natural meadows, zones with varying grazing intensity, buffer zones along river, solid barn foundation, deep straw bedding.

POLAND Wiesław Gryn

Polish winner Wiesław Gryn has made huge efforts to develop his own method of tillage and deep application of fertilizers, in order to reduce nutrient leakage.

Due to soil erosion and huge surface runoff in the late 90s, Wiesław Gryn decided to discontinue the use of a conventional ploughing system – at first partially and after four years completely. Instead he is now using an innovative ploughless tillage method where fertilizers and mineral deposits are applied deep in the ground. Such distribution of nutrients minimizes the amount of fertilizer needed, as well as the nutrient runoff. It also stimulates extensive deep root systems and improves the wealth and productivity of the soil.

"These changes were necessary in order to protect the inheritance for our future generations," explains Wiesław. "Additionally, I believe that it's the farmer's obligation to take care of their land and home. For me the only way to achieve that was to completely change the farming method," he says.

During the introduction of the new methods on the farm, the greatest difficulties came with the lack of machinery available on the market, along with a lack of knowledge among other farmers. As a result, Wiesław developed all the technical equipment himself, and today most of his neighbors are using his methods as well.

"In the beginning, when we slowly started to introduce the new cultivation method on our farm, other farmers didn't believe that it could work," explains Wiesław. "However, after a while, they began to see the results of our efforts and slowly started to change their minds."

Wiesław Gryn heard about the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award through the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Radom and decided to apply so that he could share his experiences and show other farmers that environmentally friendly organic farming doesn't necessarily mean less profit. He believes that by winning the award in Poland, he can encourage more farmers to use his methods.

"People always want to follow the winner. Hopefully, this will prove to be true also in this case, so that more and more farmers become interested in the ploughless tilling method, both for ethical and economic reasons."

Wiesław Gryn

Location: Grabowiec in southeastern Poland

Type of farm: Conventional crop farm (520 hectares)

Main production: Winter wheat, canola, corn and soya

National Jury motivation:
The Polish jury awarded Wiesław Gryn as he has many outstanding achievements with regards to the implementation of precise methods of fertilizer application. He has put a lot of effort into developing this method and even designed his own equipment to optimize it. Additionally, Mr. Gryn shows an extraordinary environmental awareness and respect for the soil, which is crucial since his farm is located in a sensitive area with high risk of erosion. The jury believes that his good example can raise awareness among Polish farmers from southern and eastern Poland – and show that agricultural activities can have an impact on the sea, even far away from the Baltic.

Key practices: Innovative ploughless strip-till system for deep application of fertilizer, inter- and catch crops, leaving crop residues on the ground, midfield trees and ponds.

RUSSIA Alexander Sergeev

"I'm very proud and happy to have won this award and it's also a great achievement for our rural settlement," says Russian winner Alexander Sergeev.

Russian farmer Alexander Sergeev and his family established their farm in Karelia not long ago and even though it was difficult in the beginning, they now enjoy their very traditional way of farming. Their main production is hay and straw that they sell to other farmers in the area but they also grow potatoes and keep some animals for their own use. The family believes that it's important to minimize their negative impact on the environment as much as possible and some of the measures they have taken to do so include having straw on the floors and barriers at the edge of the doorways, to reduce wastewater and manure runoff from the farm buildings. By keeping their farmland for mowing they also support the presence of semi-natural grasslands – something that has increased the local wildlife.

"Our way of farming is very old and traditional – I think our grandfathers did it in the same way," says Alexander. "It helps to restore the semi-natural grasslands, called 'Olonia plain', which are some hundreds of years old and very important for the wildlife in the region."

The farm works together with the local village and rural settlement to help preserve their nearest lake Megrozero and Mergera River. For example, they have supported the restoration of a dam which supports the water level in the lake. Also, they have helped to develop a petition banning all fishing in the lake and adjacent rivers. To increase engagement among farmers in Russia to use sustainable farming practices, Alexander believes that it would be useful to provide farmers with more information and also financial incentives.

"I think it would be good to have some guidelines on how to develop a nature-friendly farm and how to keep it in a sustainable way. And, of course, it would be nice if farmers who decide to work in a nature-friendly way could get financial support, but for now this is only dreams."

Alexander Sergeev

Location: Megrozero village in southern Karelia

Type of farm: Traditional hay farm (33 hectares)

Main production: Hay and straw

National Jury motivation:
The jury chose Alexander Sergeev, a private farmer from southern Karelia, as the national winner for his will to farm in a traditional way, thereby benefiting agriculture in the Karelia and Leningrad region. In addition, semi-natural grassland management provides stability for forest fringe ecosystems, and the biodiversity in the area is a sign of a healthy ecosystem. Alexander does a lot for the nearby lake that was stabilized with a dam a long time ago – with the aim to preserve the lake water level. As the jury understands it, Alexander is now involved in the process of restoring the dam.

Key practices: Conserving semi-natural grasslands, control of wastewater and manure runoff, collaboration with rural settlement administration to preserve a nearby lake and river.

SWEDEN Fredrik Andersson

Swedish winner Fredrik Andersson was surprised to learn first-hand that becoming more environmentally friendly can also mean increased harvest levels and profitability.

Many of the innovative measures to reduce the negative environmental impact from Fredrik Andersson's farm have originated from participating in Gamlebyviken Marine Environment project that started in 2011, and aims to reduce nutrient leakage to the Baltic Sea. Fredrik joined the project voluntarily as his engagement for the environment had increased when transitioning from conventional to organic farming in 2009.

"The transition was harder than we had expected and we needed to think in new ways to create more profitable methods," says Fredrik. "Participating in the project provided the opportunity to get support by consultants and experts in the field."

The measures taken at the farm include creating wetlands and dams that reduce the water runoff and thereby help retain nutrients such as phosphorous in the soil. Also, maintaining drainage systems and sloped ditches help decrease the risk of flooding and erosion with subsequent nutrient losses. And, more importantly, all the efforts have paid off. Measurements of the nutrient leakage from the farm to a close-by river show substantial decreases in both phosphorous and nitrogen and, as an added bonus, the harvest level has doubled since 2011.

"It's very stimulating to see such fast results from the changes I have made," says Fredrik. "Also, the project has increased my interest for cultivation and I have started to experiment with my own seed mixes and cereal varieties – all to optimize the harvest."

Fredrik believes that sustainable agriculture has to become more profitable to be attractive to farmers at a larger scale. But, providing encouragements in other forms, for example through the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award, can also be helpful.

"The award gives something back to the farmer, which can help to motivate taking measures for change," he says.

"I feel happy and incredibly honored to have won, and that someone has seen the changes I have made in my farming and in my attitude towards sustainable farming. Winning motivates me to continue my work for the benefit of the environment – today I feel that I'm only halfway there."

Fredrik Andersson

Location: Gamleby, Västervik, in southeastern Sweden

Type of farm: Certified organic dairy, crop and beef production farm (305 hectares)

Main production: Milk (from 145 cows), beef, forage and grain

National Jury motivation:
The Swedish winner runs an organic farm with milk production, and has implemented numerous measures to reduce nutrient losses. The wetlands, phosphorus traps, trench widening and controlled spread of fertilizers all minimize nutrient runoff to one of Sweden's most vulnerable coastal areas. Fredrik has in an exemplary way spread knowledge about his measures among colleagues and stakeholders, and it is with great pleasure that the jury awards him with the Swedish Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award.

Key practices: Structural liming and lime-based trap filters, monitoring of nutrient balances, wetlands, flow control dams, sloped ditches where there is an increased risk of flooding.

BETTER POLICIES ARE NEEDED TO SAVE THE BALTIC SEA

Seeing the new CAP (Common Agriculture Policy) in place, it is obvious that EU is not taking sufficient steps to support farmers to deliver more sustainable agricultural practices, which is needed to maintain biodiversity, water and soil quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, the countries around the Baltic Sea are not using existing tools. The national RDPs (Rural Development Programmes) are being cut in terms of both finances and measures to make modern agriculture more environmentally friendly.

Four basic principles

There is a need to assure that public money is used to reach agreed environmental, social and economic objectives, instead of locking it up in a system of environmentally harmful subsidies. WWF believes that with time, the CAP must undergo a more progressive reform and develop into a policy that can deliver truly sustainable agriculture in the region and throughout EU. For the CAP to do that, it must be based on four basic principles:

1. Public payments for public goods

Most goods and services that are produced by farmers can be fully paid for by the market. But, some public benefits must be paid for collectively. These benefits include environmental functions such as sustainable water management, preservation of biodiversity and maintenance of valued cultural and historic landscapes – as well as some non-environmental benefits such as public access and enjoyment, rural employment and the socio-economic viability of rural areas.

2. The Polluter Pays Principle

All public payments should be supported by strong regulations and the application of the 'polluter pays' principle. All beneficiaries of public payments should be able to demonstrate compliance with standards established by EU and national legislation such as the Nitrates Directive.

3. Payments linked to clear objectives and targets

One of the greatest failures of the present CAP is its inability to show how existing subsidies lead to their intended effects. No subsidies should be provided without a clear definition of what each specific subsidy is intended to provide and a thorough evaluation of how well these objectives are being met.

4. Fair and transparent distribution of funding

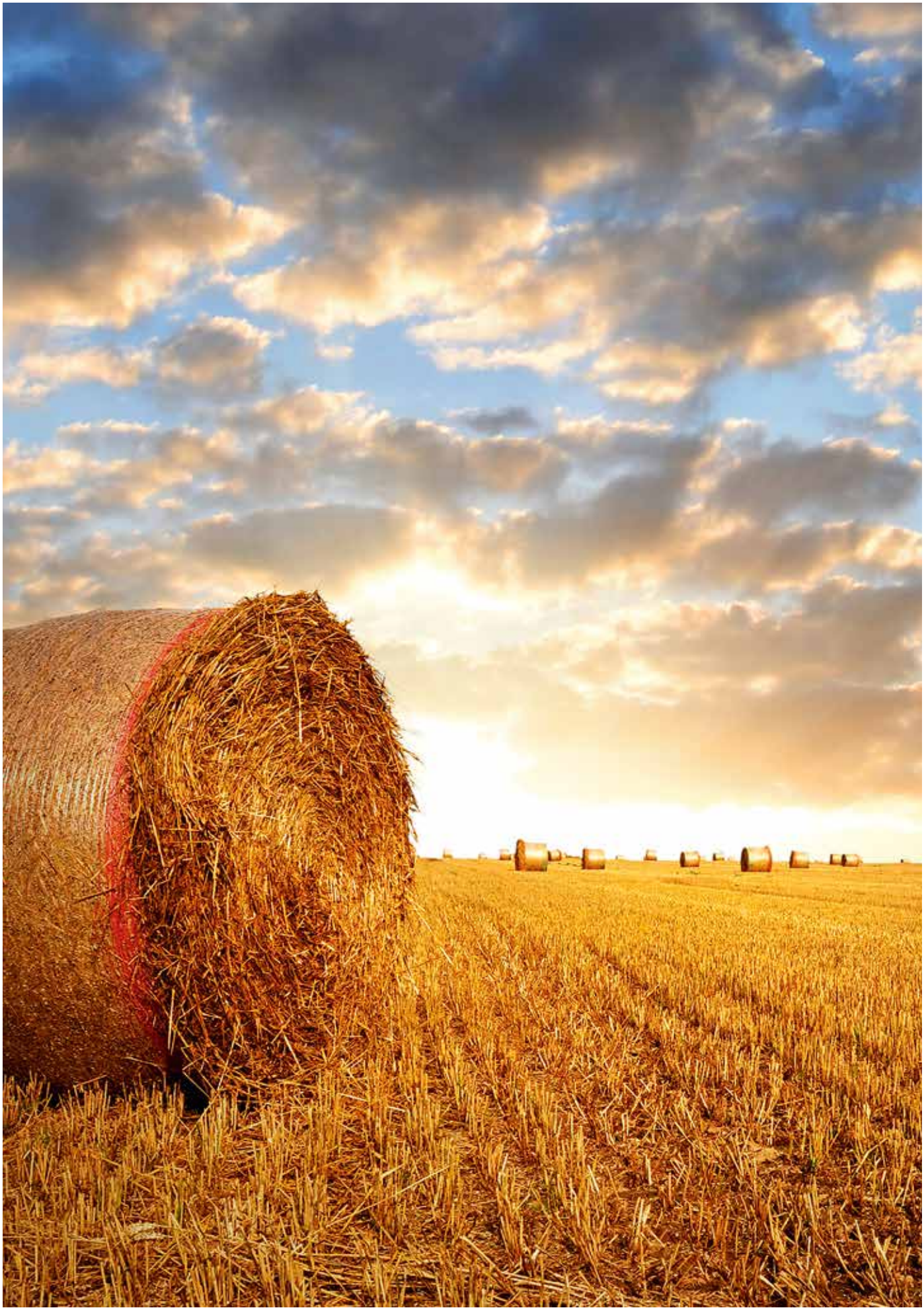
The existing division between agriculture in old and new member states must be abandoned. The distribution of funds should be a question of maximizing the benefits which are being provided by each farmer to the European society, rather than based on historical entitlements. Farmers who contribute public goods should receive the same relative amount of compensation, only adjusted for differences in purchasing power, regardless of which part of Europe they operate in.

CULTIVATING COLLABORATION

With support from the Swedish Institute, and in collaboration with 12 partners around the Baltic Sea, WWF is initiating a platform that will facilitate cooperation among farmers, national authorities, experts, universities and other stakeholders in the agricultural and environmental sector.

The conditions for agriculture are vastly different between the countries in the Baltic Sea region, with varying environmental, economic and legislative prerequisites. Farmers are increasingly demonstrating that cooperation and sharing of knowledge is the way forward to bridge the gap and improve the overall sustainability of farming practices. Yet, cooperation is not only needed among farmers – but should also involve authorities, environmental NGOs and other stakeholders.

This year WWF and 12 partners, including stakeholders from the environmental and agricultural sectors from five countries in the region (Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), have joined in a broad partnership to investigate the possibilities to form a Platform for Agri-Environment Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. The primary goal of the platform is to share and discuss experiences and best practices within the agriculture sector – with the overall aim to reduce nutrient runoff and other negative impacts from agriculture on the Baltic Sea.



MEASURES THAT CAN HELP SAVE THE BALTIC SEA

Here are the main sustainable agricultural and environmental measures practiced by current and previous winners of the WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award:

Animal production

- **A solid barn foundation** of clay or concrete prevents manure and urine from penetrating into the groundwater.
- **Storing manure** in appropriate facilities, such as containers and tanks with an impermeable base, prevents leakage. Covering the facilities with lids or plastic, or letting a natural crust form, prevents gas emissions and rainfall runoff.
- **Reducing ammonia emissions** and thereby nitrogen losses, while improving local air quality, can be done by adding basalt dust to manure and installing air filters in animal stalls. Also, using lower protein levels in the animals' feed and keeping the barn at a cooler temperature helps reduce ammonia levels.
- **Reducing the number of animals** per hectare helps to ensure that the soil can absorb all the manure.
- **Cleaning stalls without using water** prevents runoff to surrounding waters.
- **Keeping permanent grasslands** for grazing lowers nutrient runoff and helps store more carbon in the ground. They also act to preserve biodiversity.

Crop production

- **Crop rotation and using catch crops** help to optimize nutrient uptake thus minimizing the need of added fertilizer. They also help maintain a good nutrient balance in the soil and can counteract establishment of weeds and pests.
- **No-till farming and direct seeding** saves resources as the soil is worked minimally.
- **Covered soil year round** means that there are always plants available to retain nutrients in the soil that would otherwise mineralize in the ground.
- **Buffer zones** along ditches, streams, ponds and lakes reduce nutrient runoff into surrounding waters.
- **Sloped ditches** where there is an increased risk of flooding can accommodate more water and thereby decrease nutrient runoff.
- **Usage of precision agriculture** equipment and techniques minimizes resource use and the risk of over-applying fertilizers.
- **Agricultural software** can be used to plan and follow up farming activities, such as crop rotation and fertilization.
- **Analyzing and mapping the soil** and its nutrient balance on a regular basis help determine the precise amount of fertilizer needed.
- **Monitoring of drainage systems** allows the farmer to administer the right doses of fertilizer and avoid using them in places of high risk of leakage.
- **Crop diversification** improves plant protection and soil quality, and also increases biodiversity.
- **Structural liming of soils** and lime-based trap filters reduces surface water runoff of nutrients, particularly phosphorous.
- **Spreading composted manure** on fields is a natural way of fertilizing crop. Manure should only be spread during the growing season and be ploughed into the soil right after distribution.

General measures

- **Recycling of water, waste** and other resources helps close natural cycles. Recycling products and by-products from farming activities helps to maximize the use of nutrient and energy.
- **Zoning of farm land and plot swaps,** with different levels of farming intensity on different parts of the land, can optimize land-use to avoid nutrient leakage and preserve biodiversity.
- **Wetlands, ponds and dams** on the farm absorb nutrients and store them in growing biomass and in sediments, thereby reducing nutrient runoff. They also create habitats for wildlife and plants.
- **Preserving trees, shrubs** and other natural elements in and around fields helps reduce nutrient runoff and erosion and also increase biodiversity.
- **Cooperation between farmers,** organizations and other stakeholders is a great way to share knowledge on environmentally friendly farming methods and can multiply the positive effects.

FACTS ABOUT THE WWF BALTIC SEA FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD

To showcase good examples in the region and highlight the important work of farmers, WWF – in cooperation with the Baltic Farmers Forum for the Environment (BFFE) and farmers' organizations around the Baltic Sea – created the WWF Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year Award in 2009.

The award is intended to inspire farmers from the entire Baltic Sea region to take an active part in fighting eutrophication and that way help save the Baltic Sea.

Applications have been received from farmers practicing both organic and conventional farming, as well as many different types of agriculture. The national winners, chosen by juries in each country, receive a prize of 1,000 Euros.

From these national winners, an international jury selects a regional winner who receives 10,000 Euros.

Members of the national juries

DENMARK
Ella Maria Bisschop-Larsen, President, Danish Society for Nature Conservation
Morten Jørgensen, Marketing Manager, LMB Danmark A/S
Torben Hansen, President of Plant production, Danish Agriculture and Food Council

ESTONIA
Alar Astover, Associate Professor, Department of Soil Sciences and Agrochemistry, Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences
Aleksei Lotman, Marine Environment Expert, Estonian Fund for Nature
Jaak-Albert Metsoja, Head of Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association
Heiki Raudla, Editor, Estonian rural life newspaper "Maaleht"

FINLAND
Airi Kulmala, Agricultural Water Conservation Expert, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK)
Elina Erkkilä, Conservation Officer, WWF Finland
Johan Åberg, Executive Director, The Central Union of Swedish-speaking Agricultural Producers (SLC)
Sampsa Vilhunen, Head of Marine Programme, WWF Finland

GERMANY
Birgit Wilhelm, Agriculture Expert, Sustainable Agriculture and Resource Management, WWF Germany
Herwart Böhm, Scientist, Institute of Organic Farming Johann Heinrich von Thünen-Institut (vTI)
Frederike Böttger, Advisor, Farmers Association of the Federal State Schleswig-Holstein e.V.
Reinhold Stauß, Head of General Department, State Agency for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Areas

LATVIA
Ilze Skudra, Expert, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
Janis Rozītis, Director, Pasaules Dabas Fonds
Kaspars Žūriņš, Director, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre

LITHUANIA
Vilma Živatkauskienė, Senior Specialist, Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service
Anželika Dautartė, Associate Professor, Aleksandras Stulginskis University
Darius Liutikas, Head of Program Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture
Nerijus Zableckis, Project Manager, Lithuanian Fund for Nature

POLAND
Krystyna Gurbiel, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Andrzej Jagusiewicz, Chief Inspector of Environmental Protection
Krzysztof Smaczyński, Deputy Director, Department of Plant Breeding and Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Monika Zabrzeńska-Chaterera, Head of Division of Assessment of the impact on the soil-water environment, Department of Plant Breeding and Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Monika Lesz, Ministerial Counselor, Ministry of the Environment
Marek Krysztoforski, Expert, Agricultural Advisory Centre in Radom
Mateusz Sękowski, Expert, Agricultural Advisory Centre in Radom
Anna Hadyńska, Expert on Agriculture Policy, WWF Poland
Marta Kalinowska, Baltic Sea Conservation Project Coordinator, WWF Poland

RUSSIA
Evgeny Genelt-Yanovskiy, Project Manager, Baltic Fund for Nature
Komov Viacheslav, Chairman, St. Petersburg Society of Poultry breeders
Rustam Sagitov, Director, Baltic Fund for Nature and Chair of IUCN Russian National Committee
Yulia Danilova, Expert, Baltic Fund for Nature

SWEDEN
Lennart Gladh, Specialist Baltic, WWF Sweden
Nils Björid, Director, Young LRF (The Federation of Swedish Farmers)
Anders Alm, Head of Unit, Ministry of the Environment

Members of the international jury

Bo Gustavsson, Director, Baltic Nest Insitute
Irina Herzon, University Docent, Helsinki University
Lars Hvidtfeldt, Vice President, Danish Agriculture & Food Council
Viesturs Jansons, Head of Department of Environmental Engineering and Water Management, Latvia University of Agriculture
Enn Loigu, Professor, Institute of Environmental Engineering, Tallinn University of Technology
Dorota Metera, President of the board of Bioekspert ltd. and Board Member of the EU group International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM)
Kristina Narvidienė, Senior Specialist, Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service
Stina Nyström, Project Manager, WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme
Karin Stein-Bachinger, Scientist, Leibniz-Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) e.V.

PHOTO, COVER: Kostenko Maxim / Shutterstock (p.1), Günther Willinger (p.2 and p.19)

PHOTO – WINNERS: Aija Krodere (**Latvia**); Bo JM Secher (**Denmark**); Piret Sõmer (Aivar portrait), TÜ Eesti Mahe (milk bottle), Heidi Öövel (barn) (**Estonia**); Kalle Erkkilä / WWF Finland (**Finland**); Gunther Willinger (**Germany**); Egidijus Povilaitis (**Lithuania**); Karolina Tymorek / WWF Poland (farmer portrait), Wiesław Gryn (field) (**Poland**); Nilova Alena Alexanrovna (**Russia**); Västerviks kommun (**Sweden**). Last year's winner, Juhan Särgava: personal collection.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: Drew Rawcliffe (lamb p. 3); Unpict (clover p.5); Luis Carlos Jimenez del Rio (sugar beet p.6); Le Do (rapeseed flower p.8); David Dohnal (barley p.9); Nito (pile of straw p.12); Kennerth Kullman (field p.14); Konrad Weiss (flag stones p.15); Jaroslava V (straw bales p.16), / Shutterstock.

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WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

MIXED SOURCES

DELIVERING RESULTS

We are an active and effective change agent for the conservation and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea

COOPERATION

We promote constructive interactions to create awareness, spread ideas and stimulate discussion among stakeholders and partners

REGIONAL NETWORK

We represent the largest membership network in the region and are present in every country surrounding the Baltic Sea

INFLUENCE REGIONAL POLICY

We are a diligent watchdog that monitors how governments manage our common resource, the Baltic Sea

Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/baltic

Please contact us for more information!
WWF Baltic Ecoregion Porgramme
www.panda.org/balticcontacts

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