PRESS RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:00 CET ON THURSDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2024

International Fertilizer Association and Proba launch global program for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction

Paris, 10 October 2024 – The International Fertilizer Association (IFA) is partnering with supply chain decarbonization startup Proba, to support the development of a new quantification and verification standard to incentivize the wider adoption of enhanced-efficiency fertilizers, specifically focusing on nitrification and urease inhibitors. These inhibitors are compounds that can be added to inorganic or organic fertilizers to reduce nitrogen losses, including greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) such as nitrous oxide, by slowing down specific biological processes.

By working with the voluntary carbon market, this program aims to create a powerful mechanism to share costs and de-risk the adoption of inhibitors across the fertilizer supply chain, using insetting strategies to drive both innovation and sustainability.

Fertilizers are an essential agricultural input, supplying critical nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to crops. By enhancing soil fertility and boosting crop yield, they are key to feeding the global population and supporting human nutrition. However, the production and application of nitrogen fertilizers alone contribute to about 1.1billion tonnes of CO_2-equivalent greenhouse gas emissions, of which about 60% occur as nitrous oxide from agricultural fields[1].

IFA Project lead, Chief Scientist Achim Dobermann, said:

‘We are excited to begin the first stage of this important project, focused on the downstream supply chain of nitrogen-based fertilizers. We believe that a well-coordinated, science-based, and technology-focused approach led by IFA and its members is more effective and sustainable than a multitude of individual, product-specific protocols. Building on inhibitors as a first use case, this project could evolve towards a broader, sectoral decarbonization program linked to carbon finance.’

Sijbrand Tieleman, CEO at Proba said:

“There are too many emissions in the agri-food supply chain, with fertilizers contributing around 7% of the total. These emissions are hard to eliminate, but proven technology exists today to reduce them significantly. Inhibitors, for example, can cut greenhouse gas emissions by up to 50%, depending on regional, crop, and soil conditions. The challenge now is incentivizing the supply chain to adopt this technology at scale. By using an insetting approach – where emissions reductions are accounted for within the supply chain itself – and leveraging carbon finance, we can support farmers in this transition. Downstream participants in the value chain, such as food companies, can report reduced scope 3 emissions and market greener products without fear of greenwashing. The technology is mature, effective, and ready for adoption now. We’re excited to work with IFA to make this vision a reality.”

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[1] *FAO database on GHG emissions (2021 data) https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/GT*

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The project will be funded by 11 IFA members, whose representatives will actively participate in its development.

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About the International Fertilizer Association

The International Fertilizer Association (IFA) was founded in 1927 and is the only global fertilizer association, with around 500 members from more than 80 countries and a mission to promote the efficient and responsible production, distribution and use of plant nutrients. This mission plays a critical role in helping to feed the world sustainably. IFA represents providers of plant nutrition solutions. Members include fertilizer producers, traders and distributors, as well as their associations, service providers to the industry, research organizations, AgTech startups and non-governmental organizations.

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About Proba

Proba provides an innovative insetting solution for hard-to-abate sectors, generating verified impact units that help decarbonize supply chains while enhancing the business case for sustainability projects. By empowering sustainability professionals across diverse industries, Proba enables the scaling and acceleration of production methods that drive the decarbonization of global supply chains. In sectors such as fertilizer, metals, and construction, Proba's insetting solution not only creates new revenue streams for sustainability initiatives but also delivers credible reductions in scope 3 emissions within even the most complex supply chains.