



The work of FAO on plastics used in agriculture

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THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTICS USED [UNSUSTAINABLY] IN AGRICULTURE

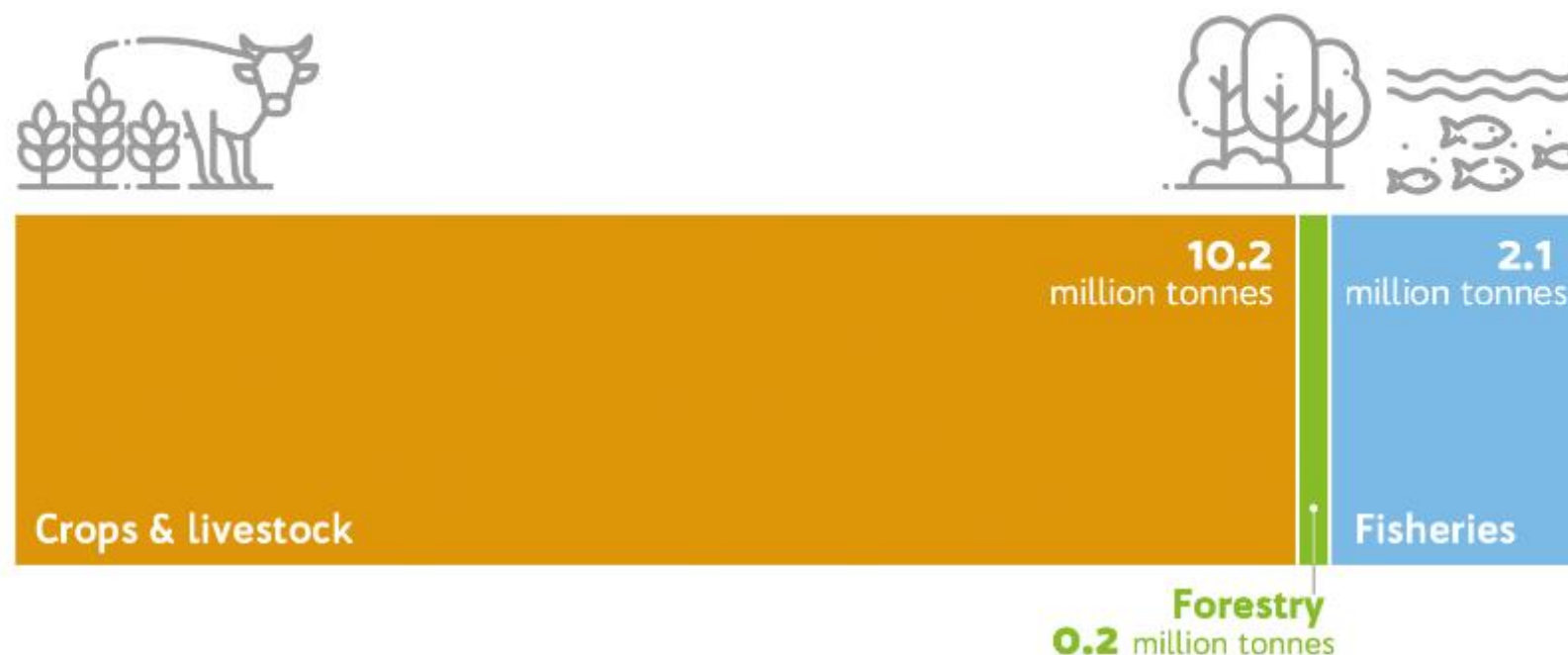


- ✓ The use of plastic products in today's agriculture is becoming increasingly commonplace
- ✓ They bring many benefits, increasing production efficiency, reducing use of agrochemicals and food losses
- ✓ However, they pose a serious risk of harm to human and ecosystem health when they are left polluting our soils.

12.5 MILLION TONNES OF PLASTICS USED ANNUALLY IN AGRICULTURE

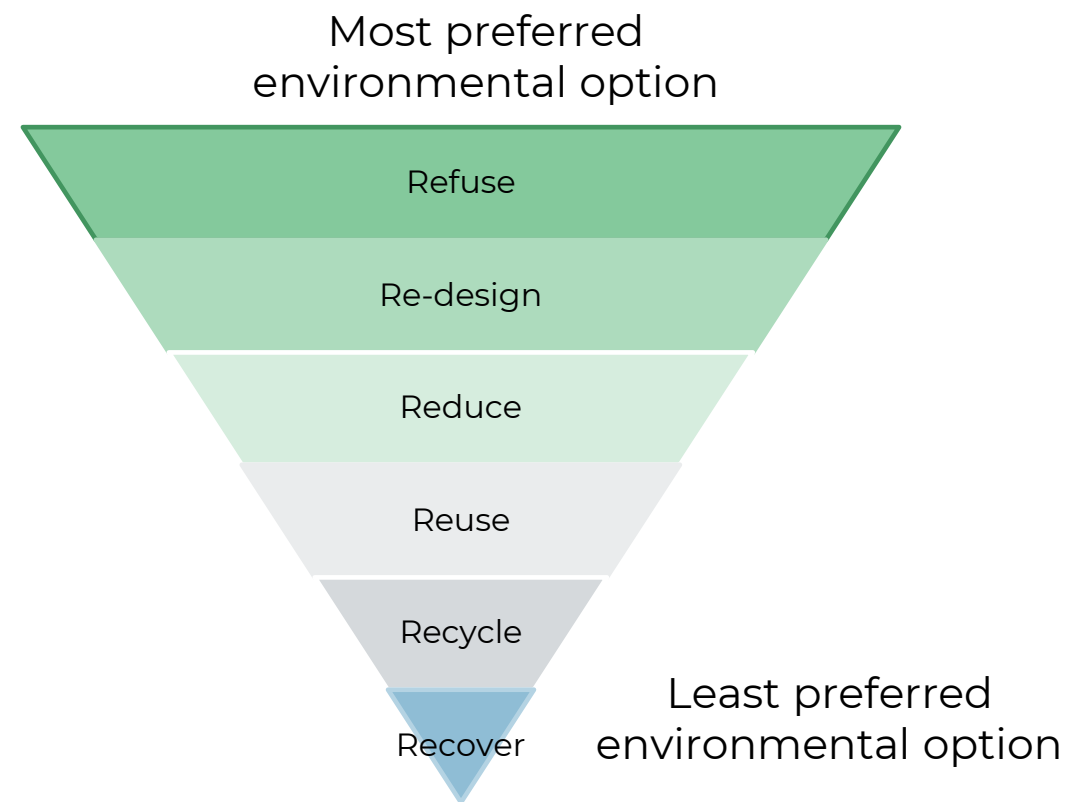
Figure 16: Estimated annual quantities of agricultural plastics used globally

Source: Data summarized from [Figure 10](#).



ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES AND INTERVENTIONS

Product	Priority/ Representative	Relative risk score
Polymer coated slow release fertilizer	Priority	10.5
Mulching films	Priority	9.8
Pesticide containers	Priority	9.5
Bale films and nets	Priority	9.3
EPS boxes	Priority	9.0
Irrigation drip tape (single-use, on-soil applications)	Priority	8.8
Fishing nets and ropes	Priority	8.7
Cages	Priority	8.7
Plastic bags (bananas)	Priority	8.7
Net float	Priority	8.5
Fertilizer containers – bags and rigid	Representative	7.8
Plant pots, seedling plugs	Representative	7.8
Plastic ties, ropes, twines	Representative	7.5
Bags for feed	Representative	7.5
Bale twine	Representative	7.4
Silage clamp films	Representative	6.8
Greenhouse films	Representative	6.7
Tree guards	Representative	6.4
Pond liners	Representative	6.4
Ear tags	Representative	5.1
Crates for harvesting	Representative	4.0





PLASTICS USED IN FISHERY

- **Fishery and aquaculture** gear made of plastic materials can be hazardous or problematic when they get lost, abandoned or discarded at sea.
- **Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)** can cause negative impacts to the marine environment and its biodiversity, food security and livelihoods, safety at sea and contributes to plastic pollution.
- The **Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear**, are the only existing policy instrument and endorsed by the FAO Committee on Fisheries that provide guidance to fisheries authorities on how to prevent and reduce ALDFG and its impacts.

171st FAO COUNCIL, December 2022

- *(k)* Encouraged FAO to **undertake further scientific and evidence-based assessments** related to the distribution, benefits, trade-offs and risks of plastics for agricultural use and their alternatives, to **address knowledge gaps**;
- *(l)* Underscored the **need for improved intersectoral collaboration and governance** to address plastic use throughout agrifood systems, and subject to the evidence-based assessment referred to in subparagraph k) **to develop, within FAO's mandate, a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture**;
- *(m)* Encouraged FAO to support deliberations of the **intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC)** on plastic pollution to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

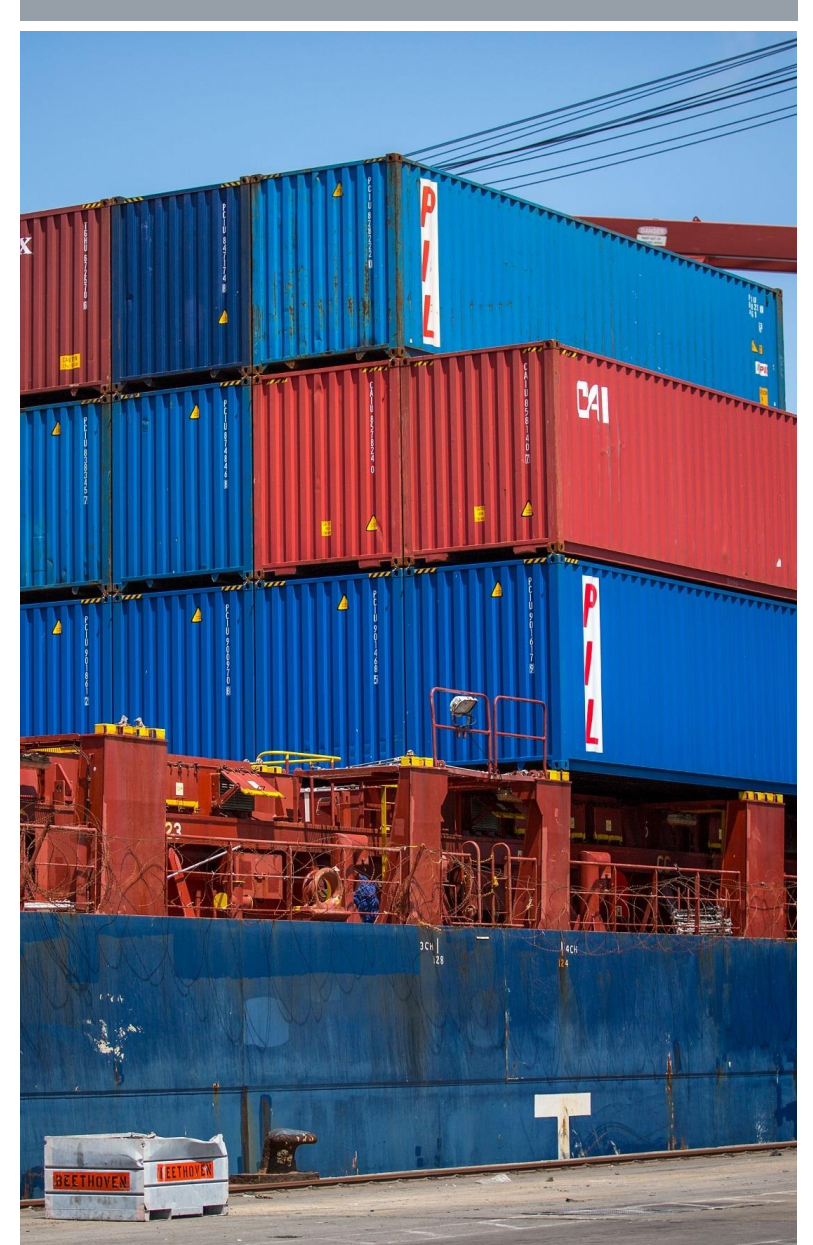


Timeline for the VCoC development

1	Informal Briefing for FAO Members	May 2023
2	Global Expert Meeting	June 2023
3	Regional Multi-Stakeholder Consultations	September-October 2023
4	Online consultations (FSN Forum)	September-November 2023
5	First draft of the VCoC	December 2023
6	Negotiations of the VCoC by FAO Members	From January 2024

PROMOTING TRADE TO IMPROVE PLASTICS MANAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURE

- Understanding the magnitude and geography of trade in plastic products for agriculture and plastic waste
- Increasing transparency of trade in plastic materials would impact positively the sustainability of plastics used
- Trade policies supporting sustainable management of plastics in agriculture, including trade in unnecessary or harmful plastics and plastic products
- Prior informed consent for exports of contaminated agricultural plastic waste





FAO AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (INC)

- FAO participates as an Observer to INC meetings supporting our Members and advocating for a treaty that recognizes the critical role agrifood systems should play in managing plastics sustainably and ending plastic pollution and protecting human health and the environment from its adverse effects throughout the life cycle of plastic.

FAO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO INC



Support Members to ensure the new instrument balances benefits and trade-offs and sustainability of **the use of plastics in food and agriculture sectors and perspectives of relevant stakeholders esp. smallholder farmers**



Promote a **holistic, circular and evidence-based approach** to plastics and microplastics management in agriculture




Specificity of the use of plastics in agrifood systems may require treating them in the framework of a **sectoral approach**




The existing FAO Guidelines and the development of a VCoC on sustainable use of plastics in agriculture will **complement** provisions under the Instrument

Zero draft and its relevance for the agricultural sector

- **Sector-specific** approaches
- **Complementarity**, coordination and cooperation with existing instruments
- **Fishing gear** included in the waste management section
- Agriculture-related provisions for **problematic and avoidable** plastics products



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Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop
an international legally binding instrument on plastic
pollution, including in the marine environment
Third session
Nairobi, 13–19 November 2023*
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Preparation of an international legally binding instrument on
plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

**Zero draft text of the international legally binding
instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine
environment**

Note by the secretariat

1. United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/14 requested the Executive



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION



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