**MEDIA STATEMENT**

*23 March 2015*

**FANZ to await UN review on Western Sahara**

The Fertiliser Association of New Zealand (FANZ) is aware of the territorial dispute in the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara and maintains an on-going process of due diligence on developments in the region and their implications for fertiliser supply.

FANZ member companies import a portion of the phosphate rock used in New Zealand for the manufacture of fertilisers from OCP Group, a Moroccan state-owned company which sources some of its rock phosphate from Western Sahara.

As part of its monitoring of the situation, FANZ has received expert independent legal advice. This indicates that there are no New Zealand or international legal or regulatory barriers to the import of rock phosphate into New Zealand from Western Sahara. In short, the New Zealand fertiliser companies are not acting illegally.

We have also received advice that OCP’s operations in Western Sahara meet the requirements of international law, in particular the relevant Resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations that the trade in resources is done in a manner consistent with the needs, interests and wishes of the local people. For example OCP, which is a significant employer in the region, has demonstrated their support for local people through community investments such as the building of healthcare centres and schools.

We also recognise that Western Sahara is subject to a long-running territorial dispute. The rights and wrongs of the situation are complex, typical of much of Africa and the Middle East. We recognise that there may be ethical as well as legal questions to be considered and as a principle we believe local people should receive reasonable benefit from the resources beneath their lands.

FANZ and its member companies are aware that the United Nations is about to undertake a review of the Western Sahara situation, due to commence next month. We support this initiative as it is very difficult for companies like ours in New Zealand to assess the rights and wrongs of such a complex situation alone. The United Nations is the ideal agency to make judgements on situations like this.

For this reason we have resolved to take no pre-emptive action regarding supply and will continue to take rock phosphate from this source at this time. Phosphorus fertilisers are vital to New Zealand’s agricultural sector and they represent an important source of revenue for Western Sahara. Neither of these benefits should be discarded without thorough investigation.

We will be maintaining a close liaison with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on this matter and through them with the progress of the United Nations review.

ENDS

Philip Mladenov

Chief Executive

**Background**

*The Fertiliser Association of New Zealand*

The Fertiliser Association of New Zealand (FANZ) is a trade association representing the New Zealand manufacturers of superphosphate and nitrogen fertilisers. FANZ has two member companies – Ballance Agri-Nutrients Ltd and Ravensdown Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd. Both of these companies are farmer owned co-operatives with some 45,000 farmer shareholders between them. FANZ member companies supply over 98 per cent of all fertiliser used in New Zealand. This represents a $2 billion share of the market.

To promote good management practices, FANZ and its member companies develop training programmes, codes of practice and industry information fact sheets. They fund research, partner with government on research and development projects and work closely with other organisations in the agricultural sector on industry-good issues. Industry research and development spending exceeds $16 million per annum. This includes funding for the OVERSEER® nutrient management tool.

FANZ supports and encourages an environmentally responsible science-based approach to nutrient management and its regulation. FANZ member companies provide products that are critical to New Zealand farming systems along with research that supports both environmentally sustainable farming practices and government’s export growth agenda. FANZ is influential across all agricultural sectors, including dairy, sheep, beef, arable and horticulture.

More information about FANZ can be found on the website at [www.fertiliser.org.nz](http://www.fertiliser.org.nz)

**Further information**

Dr Philip Mladenov

Chief Executive

Fertiliser Association of New Zealand