

# Ravensdown's position on Western Sahara

[← Back to Product Availability](#)

**Ravensdown brings phosphate rock in from Morocco and Western Sahara in order to provide superphosphate which nourishes New Zealand soils.**

Western Sahara is a non self-governing territory and subject of a complex, ongoing dispute that's been going on for over 40 years.

The UN's framework of managing resources in territories like these is that:

1. The operations should promote economic advancement and provide direct and indirect benefits to the inhabitants of the territory and to the territory itself
2. Working conditions should be non-discriminatory
3. The operations should be conducted rationally and sustainably to ensure long-term access to resources.

We conduct our due diligence with OCP who supply the rock from the area. This includes discussions with local employees and visiting OCP's community programmes in Western Sahara.

Ravensdown is satisfied that OCP does comply with the UN framework at this time. We are confident that domestic and international law currently permits importing phosphate rock from Western Sahara.

OCP's local subsidiary is the largest private employer in Western Sahara with 2,200 staff employed and 50 other local companies being supported. The hospitals, schools and social programmes reflect the net inward investment from Morocco into Western Sahara rather than the other way around.

In an area of few other opportunities, simply stopping the trade in phosphate would impact on the livelihoods of many people in Western Sahara.

We believe the key to the decades-old territorial dispute has to lie with the United Nations. We strongly support their efforts to encourage a political settlement which is the best way to help all the local people in the region.

## Background on Western Sahara

### On Phosphate

Without phosphate fertilisers, NZ rural production would fall at least 50% which equates to a \$10 billion per year hit to the economy. Over 75% of the known world's reserves of phosphate rock are in Morocco and Western Sahara. Only 2% of the known reserves are in Western Sahara.

### On PhosBoucraa

PhosBoucraa is a subsidiary of OCP and the largest employer in Western Sahara. We've been visiting the region for 20 years now and seen huge development of infrastructure over that time. We have met many of the employees who have directly benefited from the social, health and educational programmes that OCP continue to deliver. OCP's programmes are detailed here on their [website](#) and via twitter #OCP.

### On the local people

Some headlines seem to be dominated by the Saharawi people in camps on the Algerian side of the border. But there are two sides to the story and the "forgotten" group of locals are Saharawi who are in the Moroccan-administered area. These families are benefiting from OCP's massive investment in the community including schools, hospitals and social programmes.

It's by no means clear how the Saharawi on the Algerian side of the border benefit from those on the other side of the border potentially losing their livelihoods. In a part of the world where political and economic instability can rapidly degenerate, it's best not to ignore the complexity of the situation.

### On logistics / shipping

Our whole team has been calibrating the supply and manufacturing chain to minimise potential disruption. At any one time, we have up to 10 ships on the water carrying all kinds of different fertiliser. We average 35-40 shipments from all over the world including other countries that provide phosphate rock such as Vietnam and Christmas Island.

We deal with OCP as the world's largest supplier of phosphate rock and some of this is sourced from the Boucraa mine in Western Sahara.

### In summary

A post-colonial dispute between Morocco and the Polisario Front backed by Algeria has turned into a stalemate with the UN so far failing to mediate a solution. Also included on the list of non-self-governing territories by the UN Charter, but under dispute are, Gibraltar (administered by UK, but disputed by Spain), and The Falkland Islands (administered by UK, but disputed by Argentina).

- We're not convinced that the actions of two farmer-owned co-operatives on the other side of the world will change a 40 year-old political stalemate that the UN has so far failed to resolve.
- We continue to monitor the activities of OCP to ensure they continue to comply with the UN framework.
- We support the efforts by the UN to progress a solution that will benefit people on both sides of the current border.

[◀ Back to Product Availability](#)

## PRODUCTS

Fertiliser  
Agrochemicals  
Lime  
Seed  
ClearTech  
HawkEye

## EXPERTISE

Advice  
Deals and Promotions  
Environment  
Product Supply  
Research and Innovation  
The Experts  
Videos

## OUR COMPANY

Our Business  
Our Sustainability  
Our Shareholders  
Our History  
Our Future  
Our Sponsorships

## SERVICES

Planning & Advice  
Testing  
Environmental  
Spreading  
Product Availability  
My Ravensdown

## IN THE COMMUNITY

News  
Events  
Videos  
Publications

## CONTACT

Media Inquiries

[Our People](#)  
[Your Career](#)

## My Ravensdown

[Careers](#)  
[Scholarships](#)



Customer Centre: **0800 100 123**

Email: [customer.centre@ravensdown.co.nz](mailto:customer.centre@ravensdown.co.nz)

Connect with us



[Terms of Trade](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Supplier Code of Conduct](#) |  
[Supply Terms & Conditions](#) | [Site Map](#)

© 2021 Ravensdown