
MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 19, 2013

TO: USCC Market Development Committee, USCC Executive Committee, and Michael Virga, Executive Director

FROM: Ron Alexander (RAA), USCC Market Development Committee Member & Industry Liaison to AAPFCO

RE: Update from the 2013 AAPFCO Midyear Meeting

The recent AAPFCO Midyear meeting was held in New Orleans, Louisiana from February 18th to 20th. There was excellent attendance of both Control Officials and those from 'industry'.

Terms & Definitions Committee

A series of fertilizer and soil amending terms were approved by the committee in order to develop uniformity of terms with the "Uniform Fertilizer Tonnage Reporting System" (UFTRS) codes. These codes are used by states and the federal government to track product sales. The two most relevant terms to USCC members are:

SOIL AMENDMENT - (commonly referred to as Soil Additives or Soil Conditioners), means any substance or a mixture of substances which are intended to improve the physical, chemical, biochemical, biological or other characteristics of the soil, except; fertilizers, agricultural liming materials, unmanipulated animal manures, unmanipulated vegetable manures, pesticides and other materials exempt by regulation.

BIOSOLIDS - A primary organic solid material produced by wastewater treatment (SEWAGE SLUDGE) processes that can be beneficially recycled for its plant nutrient content and soil amending characteristics. (Official 1997)

Environmental Affairs Committee

The Working Group of the By-Products & Recycled Products completed the development of a cautionary statement for fertilizers and soil amendments containing and claiming beneficial microbe content (which may also be potential human pathogens) continues. This issue has been raised because many microbially-based products have come into the marketplace, some of which are also known to be, or contain, human pathogens. The cautionary statement would be required on certain products making claims on their labels that they contain microbes; based on the known risk level of the microbe (pathogen). The approved cautionary statement is as follows: *This product contains live microorganisms and may cause adverse effects to persons with a compromised immune system. Avoid contact with eyes, mouth and broken skin. Do not inhale product. Wear eye and skin protection when handling. Wash hands after using.* The concern for the composting industry is that this same cautionary statement could

be applied to organic matter-based products that are known to contain microbes/pathogens, but do not claim them on their related labels.

Discussions continued on the phosphorous restrictions being implemented by various states. As part of these discussions a presentation was made by the Espoma Company suggesting the development of a Phosphorous SUIP (Statement of Uniform Interpretation and Policy). The concept is to develop a policy which would suggest to states that restricting the use of Phosphorous may cause a reduction in turf quality (thinning), which would expose soil and allow it to erode. The eroding soil would release even greater volumes of phosphorous to the environment. The development of a Working Group to create a SUIP was approved.

A presentation was also made by Dr. George O'Connor, University of Florida, who discussed the release of phosphorus from fertilizers, biosolids, manure and composts. Relevant data that he presented included:

1. Chemical phosphorous is most mobile,
2. Biosolids containing a significant amount of Aluminum and/or Iron, strongly binds Phosphorous, reducing its solubility,
3. 80-90% of Phosphorous in organic matter based materials are in inorganic form, therefore they are soluble.
4. Phosphorous is more susceptible to leach in sandy soil and more susceptible to 'run-off' (through erosion) on clay/heavier soils, and
5. When biosolids are applied at agronomic rates for Nitrogen, excess Phosphorous is typically applied.

Uniform Bills Committee

It was suggested at an earlier meeting that the SUIP 25 – *Metals in Fertilizers*, in which the USCC was involved in developing, be used to regulate all fertilizer products. The SUIP currently creates heavy metal limits for Phosphate and micro-nutrient fertilizers (although some states do in fact use it to regulate all fertilizer products). It was suggested that the SUIP language be placed in the Rules & Regulations Section of the Uniform State Fertilizer Bill, having it pertain to all fertilizer products. The Committee agreed with this suggestion, and a Working Group was created to modify the SUIP language to make it suitable to fit in the Uniform Bill. However, during this meeting, a poll of Control Officials showed that they did not want to move forward with this effort, so it was dropped. *Keep in mind that compost, manure and biosolids products are exempt from the SUIP, even if the products are labeled as fertilizers.* This exemption has been retained thus far in the draft Bill language.

During this meeting, a presentation was provided by Dr. Michael Makovic of the FDA on proposed "Produce Safety Rules". The most relevant part of the presentation was a suggestion in the draft rules to require treatment of manure before application (e.g., composting) or a 9 month waiting period in between application and harvest. ***(This is potentially huge for the composting industry and would suggest that the USCC offer training to farmers, etc.)*** The draft regulations will come out later this spring for comment.

The AAPFCO 2013 Annual meeting is scheduled for August in St. Petersburg, Florida.