MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 20, 2020

TO: USCC Market Development Committee and USCC Executive Committee

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

RE: Update from the AAPFCO Winter Annual meeting 2020

The 2020 AAPFCO Winter Annual meeting was held in New Orleans, Louisiana from February 16th to 19th. Control Officials from 26 different states and Canada attended.

Welcome, Opening Comments, Roll Call and Vote

Under the new AAPFCO meeting format, after the Role Call, to determine which states are in attendance and to make sure that they have a quorum, voting by the membership takes place. This is also where the formal votes are taken by the membership on issues approved by the committees (and the Board) to go 'tentative' or 'official' at the previous meeting. This is when the status of new items and modifications are formalized (approved) or voted down by the membership.

Nothing was voted on during this session that affected the composting industry.

Terms & Definitions Committee

Many fertilizer related definitions were discussed during the recent committee meeting; but only two definitions, 'humic substances' and 'water extractable phosphate' relate to compost.

> T-100 Humic Substances – constituents of soil organic matter and the aquatic environment, consisting of complex heterogeneous mixtures of carbon-based substances formed by biochemical reactions during the decay and transformation of plant and microbial remains. They are primarily composed of three main fractions, called humic acids, fulvic acids, and humin, which are operationally defined by their solubility in dilute alkali and acid solutions. *Sources of humic substances are commercially harvested from terrestrial deposits which include, but are not limited to, Leonardite, oxidized lignite, oxidized sub-bituminous coals, humalite, carbonaceous shales (including humic shale), peat, and sapropel.*

This 'approved' definition, created by the Humic Products Trade Association, has the potential to limit which products can claim that they contain humic substances. That stated, several states already do allow compost to claim a humic acid content (even with the new definition in place), as long as analytical testing illustrates its existence in the product. Recently, a proposed change to the definition was being sought, so that a non-mined (plant based) material could claim that it contained humic substances. After debate over several meetings, this proposal was voted down. During this process, the USCC presented information illustrating that compost and related products contain humic substances and should be

allowed to claim such. Following the rules of order, the USCC will have to propose a modification to the humic substances definition at the next meeting in order to assure compost is included.

The term 'water extractable phosphate' was proposed by the USCC, after the previous submittal of a technical package required to propose a new definition. After short debate, the term was voted by the Committee to be recommended to go to tentative form. It is understood that additional modification to the term may be necessary.

> Pxx - Water extractable phosphate – the amount of phosphate in a carbon-based fertilizer that is readily water soluble, as determined by the SERA (Southern Extension & Research Activity) -17 test method.

Uniform Bills Committee

The only issue that was discussed at the committee meeting that could possibly affect compost (or related products), was the decision to create a biostimulants committee. There is great of debate over this term and the associated products, because some can be soil amendments, fertilizers and/or pesticides, based on EPA rule.

Lab Services Committee

In order to be able to claim that carbon-based products contain lower amounts of water-extractable phosphate, a lab method must be developed and approved to do the analysis. The importance of this claim relates to the potential negative environmental impacts of highly soluble phosphate sources. Working with The Pennsylvania State University, the USCC proposed the SERA (Southern Extension & Research Activity) -17 test method, which was developed for manure and biosolids. Many composters are now testing their products using this method, especially if their product is to be used in stormwater and erosion control applications.

After an USCC presentation, several questions were asked about the robustness of the test method. Therefore, the USCC will be required to gather this information (some of which has already been provided) to answer technical questions about the specifics of the test methods.

Environmental Affairs Committee

The USCC led working group presented additional information on the allowance of a 'slowly available phosphate' claim on compost (and other carbon-based) product labels. At the committee meeting, the USCC was asked to provide an update related to associated efforts in the Terms & Definitions and Lab Services Committees.

An excellent presentation was also completed by Dr. Nancy Rabalais, an LSU professor, about the Gulf of Mexico 'Dead Zone' (hypoxia) caused by nitrogen and phosphorus being deposited from sediment movement down the Mississippi River.

The AAPFCO 2020 Summer-Annual meeting is scheduled for August in Baltimore, Maryland.