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## MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** February 21, 2018  
**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 2018

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The 2018 AAPFCO Annual meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia from February 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. Control Officials from 29 different states and Canada attended.

### **Welcome, Opening Comments, Roll Call and Vote**

Under the new 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 the formal vote 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.

During this vote, the new 'compost' definition went 'official' and changes to the related Model Bills' compost claims section went 'tentative' (in the Bulk Compost regulations).

### **Terms & Definitions Committee**

Many fertilizer related definitions were discussed during the recent committee meeting; but all of the compost related discussions were tabled since the term was moved to official at the opening session.

*Official term – T-34 - Compost - is the product manufactured through the controlled aerobic, biological decomposition of biodegradable materials. The product has undergone mesophilic and thermophilic temperatures, which significantly reduces the viability of pathogens and weed seeds, and stabilizes the carbon such that it is beneficial to plant growth. Compost is typically used as a soil amendment, but may also contribute plant nutrients.*

Other related terms that were voted by the committee to go to official status: *These are not new definitions, but were often seen as synonyms. That is what the changes addressed.*

T-71 Slow Release Fertilizers - fertilizers in a form that release, or convert to a plant-available form, plant nutrients at a slower rate relative to an appropriate reference soluble product.

T-103 Controlled Release Fertilizers - a Slow Release Fertilizer that is engineered to provide nutrients over time at a predictable rate under specified conditions.

So, if a compost is registered as a fertilizer, it can claim that it supplies 'slow release nutrients', but not 'controlled release nutrients'.

Other related terms that were voted by the committee to go to tentative status: *Proposed modifications to the existing term are noted within the definition.*

T-100 Humic Substances – the major organic 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 ~~High concentrations~~ of humic substances are commercially harvested from terrestrial deposits ~~of which include, but are not limited to,~~ Leonardite, oxidized lignite, oxidized sub-bituminous coals, humalite, carbonaceous shales (including humic shale), peat, and sapropel.

So, this definition would disallow compost from claiming that it contains humic substances. With the new tentative status, more detailed discussions will ensue over the definition, and the composting industry must consider whether it wants to challenge the definition, which only allows mined substances to claim humic substance content. *Note – several states already allow compost to claim a humic acid content. It is unknown whether the definition will affect this situation (it hasn't up to this point).*

### **Uniform Bills Committee**

The only real issue at the committee meeting that affected compost was related to the modification to allowable compost claims. The change that was approved to go to tentative status at the opening session, was approved by the committee to go to official status.

### **Environmental Affairs Committee**

The committee chair completed two presentations on contaminants in fertilizers and soil amendment products (Canadian research). The only new business, which was proposed by the USCC liaison, was a discussion on how water extractible phosphorous content in compost (and other products) could be legally claimed on a label. Allowing for the term 'slow released phosphorous' was also brought up. The USCC will likely do a presentation on the subject at the next committee meeting.

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The AAPFCO 2018 Summer-Annual meeting is scheduled for August in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.