
MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 27, 2021
TO: USCC Market Development Committee and USCC Executive Committee
FROM: Ron Alexander (RAA), Industry Liaison to AAPFCO
RE: Update from the AAPFCO Winter Annual meeting 2021

The 2021 AAPFCO Winter Annual meeting was held virtually on February 14 to 16. Approximately 200 attendees attended the virtual meeting each day.

Welcome, Opening Comments, Roll Call and Vote

Following the 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 when the status of new items and modifications are formalized (approved) or voted down by the membership.

There were no major issues relevant to the composting industry which were voted upon during this opening session.

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 Colorado State and Pennsylvania State Universities, 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, and in states which are limiting phosphate usage on certain turf applications.

The USCC presented again on this subject, along with the Chairperson of the Committee, who sponsored a comparison of the water soluble phosphate method, used for inorganic products, and the SERA-17 method. The USCC provided carbon-based products for the test method comparisons. It was determined that both methods worked equally as well, when used to analyze both inorganic and organic (carbon-based) products. However, the SERA-17 was more efficient for testing carbon-based products (e.g., compost, biosolids fertilizer, worm castings, cow manure fiber). The only concern of the Committee, at this point, is the sampling protocol for the compost to be tested. Since the test method only requires a very small sample volume to run it, there is concern about the ability to pull a representative sample.

Terms & Definitions Committee

Many fertilizer related definitions were discussed during the recent committee meeting; but only one definition, 'water extractable phosphate' related to compost. The term 'water extractable phosphate' was proposed by the USCC, and is currently in tentative status. At the meeting, the USCC asked for the definition to be moved to official status, based on the findings of the Lab Services Committee. Unfortunately, the USCC was denied in this endeavor, and further discussion was tabled.

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.

The USCC will continue to work to have a state control official propose the definition be moved to official status. There was concern raised about how WEP would be claimed on a product label. This concern and others will be addressed before the next AAPFCO meeting.

Uniform Bills Committee

The only effort that was discussed at the committee meeting that could affect compost, and other soil amendments, is the consideration of opening up the Uniform Soil Amendment Bill for a rewrite

Environmental Affairs Committee

No Environmental Affairs Committee meeting was held during the Winter Annual meeting.

The AAPFCO 2021 Summer-Annual meeting is scheduled for August in Omaha, Nebraska (but it may be a virtual meeting again because of the COVID-19 situation).