

## **AAPFCO BREAK THREW - II**

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As many of you already know, the AAPFCO (Association of American Plant Food Control Officials) is a organization of State Department of Agriculture representatives responsible for the regulation of fertilizer and soil amendment sales/distribution. The organization seeks to protect consumers and assist in the creation of uniform legislation and regulation. The USCC has been engaged with this organization in order to promote the uniform and scientifically valid regulation of compost, as well as to provide its membership with options related to the products regulation.

### **UPDATE**

At the August AAPFCO meeting, the Uniform Bills Committee met to continue its discussions on the Bulk Compost Rules, which was developed for inclusion into the Uniform State Fertilizer Bill's Rule and Regulations section. A review of the modifications suggested the By-Products and Recycled Materials Subcommittee ensued (addition of full list of compost claims – see box below), as did discussions relative to additional potential modifications needed to the text. Although overall support for the Bulk Compost Rules was obvious from the State Control Officials, modifications are likely while the Rule is in “tentative status”. This, by nature of the AAPFCO procedures, will likely keep the entire Rules from going “official” for at least another year and a half. It may be possible, however, to push the Rules to official status, with certain sections staying in tentative status, but that is the ‘call’ of the more influential Control Officials. The Rule text that was presented to the full membership of AAPFCO at the business session can be obtained upon request from the USCC. This version was approved by the AAPFCO membership, therefore the Rule was placed in tentative status and will be published in the AAPFCO's Official Publication 59. The Committee also approved the inclusion of the list of compost claims into the next version of this document. Further discussions suggested that modifications regarding the addition and improvement to certain definitions within the Rule (e.g., composting, feedstocks) are likely. *The USCC has already forwarded the suggested definitions to the AAPFCO's Labeling / Terms Committee for consideration.*

#### **Verified compost benefits / labeling claims**

1. Improves soil structure and porosity – creating a better plant root environment
2. Increases moisture infiltration and permeability, and reduces bulk density of heavy soils – improving moisture infiltration rates and reducing erosion and runoff
3. Improves the moisture holding capacity of light soils – reducing water loss and nutrient leaching, and improving moisture retention
4. Improves the cation exchange capacity (CEC) of soils
5. Supplies organic matter
6. Aids the proliferation of soil microorganisms
7. Supplies beneficial microorganisms to soils and growing media
8. Encourages vigorous root growth
9. Allows plants to more effectively utilize nutrients, while reducing nutrient loss by leaching
10. Enables soils to retain nutrients longer

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. Contains humus – assisting in soil aggregation and making nutrients more available for plant uptake</li><li>12. Buffers soil pH</li></ol> |
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Of further interest to the USCC, the Uniform Bills Committee has created a new Soil Amendment Subcommittee. It will explore the possible modification of the Uniform Soil Amendment Bill in order to better regulate the increasing list of products being registered as soil amendments. A questionnaire was created at the meeting that will be distributed to State Control Officials. This will allow the organization to update its records on what different states are doing to regulate soil amendments, as well as provide input relative to modifying the current Uniform Bill. This will also be helpful information to USCC members. It appears that the Subcommittee will try to develop new Rules and Regulations under the Bill that would allow better regulation (and not interfere with current Law). Composts, peat and other organic matter based products, as well as wetting agents and humates are being regulated under this Bill. The USCC will stay active in this subcommittee.

For those interested in vermicompost, the AAPFCO Labeling / Terms Committee has placed the following terms in tentative status:

**T-67 Vermicompost**- Vermicompost is earthworm castings that have undergone non-thermophilically biological oxidation and stabilization.

**T-68 Earthworm Castings** are excreta of earthworms produced in a controlled environment and consist primarily of the digested material passed by the worms.

**T-69 Vermicompost Extract** The water extract of vermicompost and may contain suspended material.