KNOW YOUR COMPOST LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

COMPOSTING
Council of Canada
Conseil canadien du
COMPOSTAGE

ALLIANCE DE LA QUALITÉ
COMPOST
QUALITY ALLIANCE

Labelling rules = the world of the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency)

The CFIA rules …

…. through the

FERTILIZERS ACT and REGULATIONS

An Overview of the Rules …

T-4-120 - Regulation of Compost under the *Fertilizers Act* and *Regulations*

http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/fereng/tmemo/t-4-120e.shtml

CFIA's Interest in Compost …

Safety

Efficacy

Labelling Standards

You & the CFIA

… If you SELL compost, you must comply with the CFIA's rules

… SELL = can be in many forms (product, transport, …)

CFIA Inspectors have the right for on-site visits, will review your labels & other promo/advertising as well as test your product for compliance

Defining "Sale"

- Only products that are **SOLD**, made available for **SALE** or represented for **SALE** fall under the *Fertilizers Act.*

Sale of product versus payment for services

- Example 1: Site admission Fee
  - If a fee is charged for site admission, it is considered sale

Defining "Sale" Cont'd.

Example 2: Transportation Fee

- It is not considered sale IF the consumer has the option of picking up the product and is not charged

Example 3: Required purchase of empty package

- It is not considered sale IF the consumer can bring their own container and is not charged

CFIA's Pre-Market Assessment Service

Those selling or importing compost are encouraged to submit for a free-of-charge pre-market assessment to the CFIA Fertilizer Section.

Form = **Appendix B: Requirements for pre-market assessments**

http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/fereng/tmemo/t-4-120e.shtml#appb

➔ a pre-market assessment and/or a letter of no-objection to the sale of their product.

CFIA's Pre-Market Assessment: Label Submission

- Signing Authority
- Labels
- Complete list of ingredients
- Manufacturing Process
- Analysis of Contaminants & Guarantees
  - Heavy Metals + Pathogens (Faecal coliform / Salmonella)
  - O.M. , Moisture, Nutrients
- Efficacy & Safety Data/Rationale if applicable

Compost is …

"A solid mature product resulting from composting, which is a managed process of bio-oxidation of a solid heterogeneous organic substrate, including a thermophilic phase. This product may be designated as to kind."

Compost products are always considered supplements, but may also be considered a fertilizer depending on claims on the label

CFIA's REGULATION OF COMPOST PRODUCTS

- **Fertilizer:** any substance or mixture of substances, containing nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium or other plant food, manufactured, sold or represented for use as a **plant nutrient**;

- **Supplement:** any substance or mixture of substances, other than a fertilizer, that is manufactured, sold or represented for use in the **improvement of the physical condition of soils** or to aid plant growth or crop yields

If additional ingredients are blended into COMPOST ..

They no longer meet the definition of "compost" as set out in Schedule II.

→ these products may or may not be exempt from registration. The regulatory requirements for these products will depend on the final product blend, its composition and label claims.

Similarly, liquid compost tea products do not meet the definition of "compost" in Schedule II and may be subject to different regulatory requirements.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Labelling is required whether the product is sold packaged OR in bulk.

For bulk purchases, the information can be provided via brochures/ supplementary pieces and/or on the purchase receipt.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

If your website is included on your label, all information contained therein is considered part of your label and subject to CFIA review.

Language

- Can be either English or French
- If any words are of the other language, the entire label needs to be bilingual

What needs to be on the label

1. **product name**
2. **net weight**
3. **name and address of the registrant or the responsible packager**
4. **lot number**
5. **guaranteed analysis**
6. **directions for use**
7. **cautionary statements (if applicable)**

BASIC REQUIREMENTS (cont.)

- Front panel (if compost is packaged)
  - Brand Name (if a specific brand has been created)
  - Product Name (Compost)
  - Net Weight, listed in kilograms
  - Name and Address of Manufacturer
  - **Lot Number**

BASIC REQUIREMENTS (cont.)

- Back Panel (if compost is packaged)
  - Guaranteed Analysis
    - Organic Matter % (Minimum)
    - Moisture Content % (Maximum)
    - Optional: Nutrient Content (N-P-K) if claimed; Micronutrients - actual amounts

BASIC REQUIREMENTS (cont.)

- Back Panel (continued)
  - Directions for Use (must include instructions concerning…)
    - Application rate
    - Frequency
    - Time of Application
    - Reference to type of plants or crop
    - Wording should be chosen very carefully, and **all claims need to be backed up**

Product Name

- Kind of compost
  - designation according to kind is acceptable but not required
  - however, if one feedstock is listed, all must be listed at least separately in a list of ingredients

Product Name

- If other ingredients are added to the compost, they must be stated in the product name.

- For example, a product cannot be called "compost" if it contains compost mixed with other materials, such as a chemical fertilizer.

  eg. compost with urea 5-2-0
  composted cattle manure with lime

NOTE: that this type of product may be subject to additional regulatory requirements, such as product registration.

GRADE

If one or more major nutrients are claimed, the fertilizer grade must be included in the product name. The grade is composed of the percentage by weight of the major plant nutrients (N-P-K) in the total product.

- Guaranteed minimum content
- Analytical tolerances for major nutrients are outlined in Table I of Schedule I of the *Fertilizers Regulations*.

Nitrogen Guarantees

- If the Total Nitrogen is guaranteed, the label must also **state the percentage of total nitrogen that is in a water insoluble form**. The water insoluble nitrogen must appear in the guaranteed analysis as a percentage of the total product.

- This is required in order to ensure consumers are not misled about the amount of nitrogen that is immediately available for plant uptake from the compost.

  e.g. Total Nitrogen (N).....10%
  9% water-insoluble nitrogen

Micronutrients

- May be listed in Guaranteed Analysis section

- Must be actual content

  ***** Difficult to guarantee

EXAMPLE

Guaranteed Minimum Analysis

- **Organic Matter ……..30.00%**
- **Maximum Moisture……50.00%**
- **Total Nitrogen (N). 2.00%**

  1.75% Water Insoluble Nitrogen
- **Available Phosphoric Acid (P_2O_5). 2.25%**
- **Total Phosphoric Acid (P_2O_5) 5.00%**
- **Soluble Potash (K_2O) 2.00%**
- **Iron (actual) 0.25%**

Net Weight

All compost product are sold by weight, and must be described in grams (g) or kilograms (kg).

** If desired, volume in litres (L) or millilitres (ml) may be included in addition to the weight of the product.

E.g. Net weight: 10 kg, Net volume: 25 L

Name & Address

The company name (i.e., the responsible packager or registrant) and the complete postal address must be displayed on the main panel of the label.

The complete postal address includes the company name, street address and/or P.O. Box, city or town, province or state and the postal code.

Guaranteed Analysis

- The guaranteed analysis represents the product's nutrient and/or other active ingredient content.
- All guarantees are made in percent, and are calculated based on the weight of the final product at maximum moisture.
- If the product is claimed to provide nutrients, these nutrient guarantees must appear in the guaranteed analysis portion of the product label.

Guaranteed Analysis

- The guarantees for the **minimum amount of organic matter** and the **maximum moisture content** are mandatory for compost.

- In order to ensure that the minimum guarantee can be met, organic matter should be measured, and guaranteed, as a percentage of the product at maximum moisture.

Guaranteed Analysis

- The total **organic matter** content must not be less than 15% of the total weight of the compost product. The actual organic matter content must not have a deficiency of greater than 15 % of the guaranteed amount upon analysis.

  e.g. A product with a guarantee of 40% organic matter (minimum) must not contain less than 34% organic matter upon analysis.

Guaranteed Analysis

- The moisture content **must not exceed 65%** of the net weight for all types of compost and composted manure. The actual moisture content must not be in excess of 15% of the guaranteed amount upon analysis.

  e.g. A claim of 50% moisture (maximum) must not contain more than 57.5% moisture upon analysis.

Major Nutrients

Compost is classified in Schedule II as a supplement, and as such nutrient guarantees are not mandatory.

However, if any claims are made regarding nutritional value of the product, such as for composted manure, the product would then be classified as a supplement and a fertilizer, and the label would have to include the guarantees for the major nutrients.

Cautionary Statements

Cautionary statements indicate to the user the precautions to observe when handling a supplement product.

The need for cautionary statements depends on the composition and use of the compost and will be specific for each product.

Cautionary Statements

- **Enhanced Feed Ban - Prohibited Material**
  Composts containing prohibited material must bear a label with precautionary statements **in both official languages**

Product Claims – Benefits/Efficacy

- All product claims must be supported by valid scientific data.

- Backup information needs to be available for all claims
  - Certification or product grade
  - Nutrient levels in product
  - Specific product benefits

Product Claims – Benefits/Efficacy

- Product labels should avoid any claims which are not substantiated by scientific, peer-reviewed literature. The *Fertilizers Act* and the *Competition Act* are the authorities under which the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Industry Canada may proceed in any action involving false and misleading claims.

- In addition, any claims related to disease resistance and/or pest control must not be included on a product label, unless the product has been registered by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA).

Product Claims – Slow Release

If a company intends to identify the compost as a slow release fertilizer, the product must provide at least 25% of the guaranteed nutrient in water-insoluble form or other slowly available form.

This water-insoluble fraction of the nutrient must be identified in the Guaranteed Minimum Analysis section on the product label.

Product Claims – Organic

Products that are solely derived from organic matter (partially humified remains of animals and plants) may be identified or described as "organic".

Materials and final product may NOT have been subject to treatment with chemicals.

If the product contains at least 15% organic matter, it may be described as "organic based". All composts must contain at least this amount, so would be allowed to use this term.

Product Claims – Natural

Must consist of materials found in nature

Materials can be subject only to physical processes (eg. Crushing and drying)

To use “natural” claim companies must provide a list of all ingredients including sources, and a complete description of processing methods.

CHOICES

pH

- pH ranges are allowed, but not required
- Where listed, pH should not be listed as an absolute number, but as a range
- Range must not be greater than 2 pH units
- No tolerance around the range

CHOICES

Sodium

A statement indicating the sodium concentration is recommended, but it is not required, on a compost product label in order to allow consumers to determine the best use for the product. This statement must not appear in the guaranteed analysis section of the product label.

WHAT NOT TO CLAIM!

- Product claims indirectly implying product superiority over other similar products
  - e.g. “Safe for all Applications” implies other products are not necessarily so, though all should be…
  - No “%” claims (eg. 100% Natural or Organic) are allowed. Products are either organic or natural or they’re not…

Contact CFIA

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