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New Rules for Fertilizers and Compost



The Colorado Department of Agriculture's Fertilizer Program provides consumer protection through inspection, sampling, and analysis of fertilizers, soil conditioners, and plant amendments used for agricultural production, home, lawn and garden. Labeling requirements help consumers see what they are getting when they purchase a product and sampling and analysis help insure the consumer is getting what they paid for. States use the standards set by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials to achieve uniformity in how the different states regulate the fertilizer industry.

Recent changes to the Colorado Fertilizer Law include the addition of requirements for the distribution of compost. Compost is one of nature's best mulches and soil amendments. You can use it instead of commercial fertilizers. Using compost improves soil structure, texture and aeration and increases the soil's water-holding capacity. Compost loosens clay soils and helps sandy soils retain water. Adding compost improves soil fertility and stimulates healthy root development in plants. The organic matter in compost provides food for microorganisms, which keeps the soil healthy and balanced. Nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus will be produced naturally by the feeding of microorganisms in compost so few, if any, soil amendments will need to be added.

The new amendment to the Colorado Commercial Fertilizer, Soil Conditioner and Plant Amendment Act authorizes the department to promulgate rules to help with the administration of the Fertilizer Law.

The following is a summary of the proposed rules:

- Adopt by reference the official terms for fertilizers and soil conditioners as listed in the 2008 Official Publication of the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials
- Establish a date of July 1 for the registration of fertilizer products and a date of January 1 for compost manufacturing facilities
- Establish a due date of January 1 for distribution (tonnage) reports
- Establish minimum standards for stability and maturity for compost and lab analysis methods for testing those standards and labeling requirements for compost
- Establish the level of concentration of certain metals that would deem fertilizer to be adulterated as defined by the 2008 Official Publication of the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials, Inc (AAPFCO)
- Establish the level of concentration of certain metals and pathogens that would deem compost to be adulterated as defined by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) 6 CCR 1007-2.
- The sampling and laboratory analysis methods for fertilizers have been updated from the 12th Edition of the Official Methods of the Association of Official Analytical Chemists, International (AOACI) to the current methods found in the 18th Edition of the AOACI

- Establish the laboratory analysis method for iron sucrate, an ingredient that helps plants look green; the iron sucrate method was added to allow the use of iron sucrate products for turf grass fertilizer
- Establish sampling and laboratory analysis methods for compost
- Update rules and cleanup of outdated language

The draft rule was published September 10, 2008. The rulemaking hearing will be held October 1, 2008 at 10:00 A.M. in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, 700 Kipling Street, Suite 4000, Lakewood, CO 80215-8000

Here is a link to the proposed rule under Hot Topics on the Fertilizer website: [Proposed Fertilizer Rules](#)

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