



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF

FOOD & AGRICULTURE

Karen Ross, Secretary

December 9, 2025

**Notice to Fertilizing Material Licensees:
Beneficial Substance Labeling Format
(Effective Rulemaking Update)**

Dear Fertilizing Material Licensee:

On August 26, 2024, Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 1522 into law. In part, this bill provided a fertilizing materials product classification and definition for “beneficial substances” – Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) sections 14513 and 14533:

14513. “Beneficial substance” means any substance or compound, other than primary plant nutrients, secondary plant nutrients, and micronutrients, and excluding pesticides, that can be demonstrated by scientific research to be beneficial to one or more species of plants, soil, or media. A beneficial substance includes, but is not limited to, plant biostimulants.

14533. “Fertilizing material” means any commercial fertilizer, agricultural mineral, beneficial substance, or organic input material.

This definition and the corresponding label format identified below will help improve standardization and uniformity throughout the United States. These changes are consistent with the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials’ (AAPFCO) Uniform Beneficial Substances Bill.

The Fertilizing Materials Inspection Program (FMIP) completed rulemaking that included a new beneficial substances label format, approved and effective on November 14, 2025. The required label format for applicable products is as follows:

Title 3. California Code of Regulations.

Section 2303 (g)

A statement of composition showing the amount of each ingredient, which is the agent in a product primarily responsible for the intended effects (*for beneficial substances*) using the following format:

CONTAINS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE(S)

Name of beneficial substance

% (or acceptable units)

Species of microorganism

viable CFU/cm³, /mL, /g, or other acceptable units

(Identify and list all beneficial substances. Substances shall include ingredient source, if applicable. Ex. “humic acid from leonardite or saponin from Yucca schidigera”).



Similarly, if the beneficial substance ingredient(s) follows a plant nutrient guaranteed analysis, the following format is required:

Section 2303 (k)

The following format and guarantees, as applicable for the following products or ingredients, shall appear after the derivation statement of agricultural mineral and commercial fertilizer labels:

ALSO CONTAINS BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCE(S)

Name of beneficial substance
Species of microorganism

% (or acceptable units)
viable CFU/cm³, /mL, /g or
other acceptable units

(Identify and list all beneficial substances. Substances shall include ingredient source, if applicable. Ex. "humic acid from leonardite or saponin from Yucca schidigera").

Key timeline and requirements for label format adoption include:

- For all new labels submitted for product registration or for label updates to existing registrations, the "Contains Beneficial Substance(s)" label format will replace the "Nonplant Food Ingredient(s)" format for applicable labels, effective immediately.
- For all labels initiating a four-year registration renewal cycle, the "Contains Beneficial Substance(s)" label format will be required beginning January 1, 2026 (*Registration Group 4*).
- Any registration group with a pro-rated, transitional registration cycle (*Registration Groups 1 & 2*) will require the "Contains Beneficial Substance(s)" label format upon their subsequent four-year registration cycle (January 1, 2027 and January 1, 2028, respectively). For *Registration Group 3*, any remaining registered labels not yet revised to the new label format can either submit a label update form or wait until their next product registration renewal cycle.
- Any product label with the previously approved "Nonplant Food Ingredient(s)" label format will be permitted in the channels of trade for each firm's subsequent four-year product registration cycle. This will minimize market disruption and allow existing, compliant labels to exhaust current inventory.
- The label format for beneficial substances that solely act as a soil amendment or condition soil through physical means will remain unchanged (i.e. a list of ingredients).
- "Contains Beneficial Substance(s)" is not required to be in all capital letters.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at fertilizer@cdfa.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY NICK YOUNG

Nick Young
Environmental Program Manager