



March 11, 2015

NOTICE TO INDUSTRY

Fertilizer Manufacturers, Distributors, and Organic Certifiers

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to announce the Feed, Fertilizer, and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services (FFLDRS) Branch's Organic Input Material (OIM) program received word last week it has been accredited to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17065 requirements. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Agriculture Marketing Services accreditation confirms the CDFA's OIM program is a reputable third party entity capable of evaluating OIMs that are to be used in organic crop and food production. USDA - NOP's Policy Memo 11-4 specifies agents may recognize reviews conducted by other certifying agents, the Environmental Protection Agency, and ISO 17065 (formerly ISO Guide 65) accredited material evaluation programs reviewing products for compliance to NOP regulations.

Fertilizing materials distributed in California that are suitable for use as an OIM must be registered with CDFA. In order to be registered as an OIM, CDFA must review the product and determine that it meets USDA - National Organic Program (NOP) standards. The program currently has reviewed and approved over 1,200 OIMs for use in California; the public may check of the status of any fertilizing product by accessing the programs web site at http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer_OIM.html. A list of approved products is also available on the program's website.

In 2010, the State of California passed legislation establishing the OIM program within the CDFA's Fertilizing Material Inspection Program (FMIP). The legislation was designed to address concerns about integrity of fertilizing materials marketed for use in certified organic growing. The OIM program is mandated to perform a review of each OIM label to ensure nutrient guarantees and claims are scientifically feasible and meet the USDA - NOP standards. In addition, the law made it a crime to adulterate OIMs and established that violators may be subject to fines and license revocations. The law further stipulates that OIM manufacturers shall be inspected a minimum of once yearly to validate label nutrient guarantees, claims, and compliance with NOP standards. In accordance with the Food and Agricultural Code, OIM products cannot be distributed in California unless it is registered with the CDFA. As of January 1, 2012 all enforcement, regulatory, and administrative functions of the OIM program were fully implemented by the OIM program.

Inspection and compliance aspects of the program are essential to ongoing ISO accreditation. CDFA investigators inspect OIM producers within California and adjacent states. CDFA has recently contracted with an ISO accredited entity, Ecocert ICO, LLC, to assist the CDFA in inspecting facilities beyond California's borders.

The CDFA looks forward to working with industry and accredited certifying agents to continue to ensure all California registered OIM products used in an organic system meet USDA - NOP regulations. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the program manager, Dr. Dale Woods at (916) 900-5022.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY AMADOU BA

Amadou Ba, Environmental Program Manager II
Feed, Fertilizer, and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services Branch