



EFAR'S POSITION PAPER FOR SAFETY AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR FERTILISING MATERIALS

EFAR (EUROPEAN FEDERATION FOR AGRICULTURAL RECYCLING) gathers and represents at a European level companies specialising in landspreading of organic wastes and fertilisers. **EFAR's** members are managing the day to day operation for the recycling on land of more than 3 000 000 tonnes of sludge, 800 000 tonnes of compost produced by the treatment of biodegradable waste and 200 000 tonnes of digestate. Therefore **EFAR's** members are highly concerned by the revision of the fertiliser regulation and by the definition of the associated safety and quality requirements.

EFAR agrees that it is essential to guarantee to the end customers the agronomical properties and the safety of use of any type of fertiliser at their standard application rate. If the corresponding parameters have to be defined on scientific evidence it is also critical to ensure that there is consistency between the different applicable regulations for the use of fertilisers, whether under waste or product status, as the final target is soil improvement or crop nutrition without impact on public health or the environment. Having said that **EFAR** considers that the work carried out by the **JRC** regarding the End Of Waste criteria for compost and digestate cannot be used as the major reference in the decision making process as there was no expert consensus on its content particularly regarding the above mentioned parameters.

EFAR also believes that the revision of the 2003/2003 regulation is an opportunity to integrate into the scope new type of fertiliser generated by the development of new recovery processes as struvite, biochar, biomass ashes, calcium phosphate or ammonium sulphate produced by effluent treatment and stripping.

Regarding the document on "Essential safety and quality requirements for fertilising materials" our remarks are :

- **Slide 3: EFAR** is not in favour of a negative list and is advocating for the definition of appropriated treatment with the definition of specific limit values related to the type of feedstock used into the production process. As an example composted sludge could be considered as a soil improver with limits on relevant organic contaminants referring to the conclusion of the **FATE SEES** study and of the **INERIS CNRS** risk assessment study.

- **Slide 4:** the risk based limits have to be adapted regarding the type of use particularly for pathogens where the risk is not comparable between industrial crops and market gardening (crops that can be eaten raw). The risk based limits have also to be consistent with other EU regulations regarding the use of other agricultural inputs that will finally integrate the soil eco-system.
- **Slide 5:** the quality requirements should avoid for the same material to find itself in two different categories.
- **Slide 9:** the minimum nutrient content is too low the sum of N + P₂O₅ + K₂O shall be at least of 7%. Nutrient content has to be guaranteed on wet weight instead of dry matter. Expressing nutrient content on dry matter is contradictory to the principle of helping the farmer to make the optimal use of the fertilising material as stated in slide 5.
- **Slide 12:** as organic fertilisers are supposed to be used at less spreading rates than soil improvers there is no consistency to have the same limit values for both types of materials. Moreover there is also no consistency between limit values proposed for mineral fertilisers and for organic fertiliser. Indeed when considering the appropriate spreading rates the maximum flows of trace elements brought to soil are varying significantly (e.g.: from 5 to 30 g per ha and per year for cadmium). Therefore to comply with the risk based approach **EFAR** would recommend to set up flow limits for trace elements.
- **Slide 13:** **EFAR** suggests to adapt these limits regarding the final use of the fertiliser and to adopt a limit of no salmonella species in 1 g sample and of less of 10⁴ CFU/g for E Coli regarding industrial crops that cannot be eaten raw.
- **Slide 14:** compost has to be considered as soil improver rather than organic fertiliser.
- **Slide 16:** Same point as slide 9 regarding minimum nutrient content with in addition a minimum of organic nitrogen of 1% on wet weight.
- **Slide 20:** minimum of dry matter (30%) and of organic matter on wet weight (20%) have to be specified. In opposition with organic fertiliser N + P₂O₅ + K₂O concentration has to be of less than 7%.
- **Slide 21:** as stated before **EFAR** refuses to consider the EOW limit values as consensual and risk based. **EFAR** considers that limit values are too stringent particularly for copper and nickel. This will disqualified manure as potential feedstock for the production of soil improvers. **EFAR** recommends increasing the limit value up to 300 ppm for copper (half of the average content of pig slurry) and up to 100 ppm for nickel. Regarding copper **EFAR** draw the attention of DG enterprises on the fact that the recent 354/2014 regulation allows up to 6 kg of copper per hectare and per year for organic production! This has to be compared with a flow of 1 kg/ha/year resulting of the continuous and controlled use of soil improver at a spreading rate of 20 tonnes wet weight every 3 years.



- **Slide 22:** there is obviously a lack of consistency between the limit values set for growing media which are used as a unique substrate for crop growing and the one set for soil improvers which are used at a rate representing less of 0.3% of the soil in place.

Looking forward to discuss these different issues,

Yours faithfully.

Hubert BRUNET
Chairman