



ADVOCACY TOOLBOX

What is Advocacy and Why Should I Care?

Advocacy, in its simplest terms, is the act of letting the government know what you think about current or pending policy or legislation.

Why you should care is also fairly simple; the government makes the rules by which we all have to live, play and work. And whether you want to create a new rule, repeal an old rule or stop a rule, your course of action is the same: you must talk to the government.

The good news is that your voice will be heard if you engage in advocacy because not many people actually take the time or make the effort to get involved. Another bit of good news is that members of Congress (MOCs) and their staff want to hear from you because they need to know what is going on in their districts and how constituents feel about specific policies and legislation. A MOC won't always do what you ask, but they and their staff will always listen.

What MOCs Need From You

Another important reason MOCs and their staff want to engage with you is because you have a deep knowledge base regarding fertilizer and agriculture. MOCs must understand how specific legislation and policies are going to affect the communities they serve, and when it comes to issues impacting fertilizer the expertise they are looking for comes from you. Be the resource your MOC or agricultural staffer needs and you will quickly become an effective advocate.

***Side Tip:** While you are certainly a fertilizer expert, there will be times when you are asked a question to which you don't know or can't remember the correct answer. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know and offer to follow-up with the correct answer. This response gives you an opportunity to have a future contact with the MOC's office and builds your reputation as an honest and reliable resource. Misleading an MOC once (intentionally or not) will do permanent damage to your reputation.*

Get Personal

Few people are persuaded by facts alone. The most effective and powerful advocacy comes in the form of personal story telling that MOCs, fellow advocates, the media and others can easily relate. When telling your personal story, be sure to use language and terms that the MOC and staff can easily understand. If your story evokes emotion and resonates with your MOC, he or she will share it with others when speaking about your issue in public speeches, talks with the media and policy discussions with other MOCs.