

Critical Importance of a Single, Uniform Plant Biostimulant Label and Definition Across All 50 States

Introduction

Plant biostimulants can potentially play a crucial role in sustainable agriculture by promoting nutrient uptake, stress tolerance, and overall plant vigor. However, the regulatory landscape for plant biostimulants varies across different states in the U.S., leading to inconsistencies and confusion among producers, consumers, and regulatory bodies. We have an opportunity to introduce legislation in all 50 states that utilizes the same definition (as adopted by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials [AAPFCO]) and one label to facilitate interstate commerce, clarity for growers, and reduced burden on registrants. The importance of a single plant biostimulant label across all 50 states cannot be understated, as it addresses various challenges and offers significant benefits to the agricultural industry and the environment. AAPFCO has unanimously adopted the model bill that is being used for state legislation. We collectively urge that NO modifications be made to the label or plant biostimulant definition.

Challenges Without a Uniform 50-State Label and Definition

1. Inconsistent Laws & Regulations: The lack of uniformity in plant biostimulant regulations across states results in differing definitions, registration requirements, and labeling standards. This inconsistency creates confusion for manufacturers, distributors, and consumers alike.

2. Barriers to Innovation: Varying laws and regulations hinder the development and adoption of new and advanced biostimulant technologies. Manufacturers face the challenge of adapting their products to comply with multiple sets of laws and regulations, which can stifle innovation in the field.

3. Market Fragmentation: Inconsistent labeling and regulation limit market access and create inefficiencies for manufacturers operating in multiple states. This fragmentation reduces the potential benefits of economies of scale and hampers the growth of the biostimulant industry.

4. Wasted Labor Cost: State-to-state inconsistencies with plant biostimulant labeling collectively results in thousands of hours of additional labor cost for the agricultural industry and state government regulating bodies due to excessive and unnecessary dialog between the industry and various states in order to achieve a functional label that meets all of the current differing label formats across multiple states.



Benefits

Long-Sought Multi-State & Multi-Federal Agency Uniformity: The United States Department of Agriculture recommended the definition of “plant biostimulant” as reported in their 2019 Report to Congress. The current marker bills (H.R. 1472 and S. 802) direct the Environmental Protection Agency to include the definition within federal regulations and exempt these products from FIFRA. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) recently adopted the plant biostimulant definition creating global harmonization. And AAPFCO has adopted formal recognition of plant biostimulants within a uniform bill to promote all state departments of agriculture follow the same standard.

Clarity and Consistency: A standardized biostimulant label across all states would provide clear and consistent information about product composition, recommended usage, and safety precautions. This clarity benefits both producers and consumers by facilitating informed decision-making.

Enhanced Market Access: A uniform label would simplify the process of bringing biostimulant products to market, allowing manufacturers to navigate regulations more efficiently and access a broader customer base across state borders.

Encouragement of Innovation: A harmonized regulatory framework encourages innovation by reducing the barriers companies face when developing and introducing new biostimulant products. This innovation can lead to more effective and sustainable agricultural practices.

Consumer Confidence: Standardized labeling instills greater trust among consumers, as they can rely on consistent product information and quality across different brands and states. This confidence contributes to increased adoption of biostimulant products.

Environmental Impact: Uniform regulations enable the development of biostimulants with proven environmental benefits, such as the remediation of soil contaminants, reduced nitrification of soils, enhanced carbon sequestration, as well as a multitude of other solutions for improved soil health. A consistent label can promote the use of eco-friendly solutions in agriculture.

Conclusion

We urge all state legislatures to refrain from making any changes or tweaks to the label or the recently, unanimously adopted AAPFCO plant biostimulant definition (official). A single plant biostimulant label across all 50 states would streamline regulations, promote innovation, and enhance the competitiveness of the agricultural industry. By providing clarity, consistency, and increased market access, a standardized label supports sustainable farming practices, consumer confidence, and environmental stewardship. Collaborative efforts among regulatory bodies, industry stakeholders, and advocacy groups can pave the way for a more cohesive and effective biostimulant regulatory framework in the United States.