

WORKING GROUP 1 - OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE FERTILISERS REGULATION

Conclusions of the second meeting of WG1 on 13 and 14 June 2012

The UK's Agricultural Lime Association (ALA) comments.

ALA strongly believe that the new EU fertiliser regulation should include a specific category for liming materials (LM), recognising the unique nature, singular standards, specifications and declarations LM are designed to deliver.

Liming materials (LM) are universally recognised by farmers, growers and land managers as natural, pure mineral mixtures containing one or both of the elements Calcium or Magnesium in the oxide, hydroxide, carbonate or silicate form.

Their unique principle is the reduction and neutralisation of soil acidity, providing the basis for well structured, friable, productive soils with a capacity for the optimisation of nutrient availability, to stabilise and reduce the solubility of heavy metals, ensuring protection of soils and the environment in both land and marine application.

The principal, but not only measure of LMs, is Neutralising Value (NV). This test relates to the strength and origin of the parent rock type. Reactivity, or the speed of reaction within the soil, is again solely related to rock type (hardness) and the degree of fineness (milling). Both tests are industry recognised measures singularly unique to LMs with no comparable measure or mark with either organic or inorganic soil improvers or amendments. On this point alone ALA feel there is every justification for a distinct LM category with there being no connection or comparison to either soil improvers or amendments, the measures of which in both types - either organic or inorganic - have no relevance or identification with LMs.

TC260 WG3 have spent many years producing the acceptable wording and specification of the 7th ATP currently under preparation by the Commission. This work is based on the extensive technical knowledge and experience of TC260 WG 3's experts.

ALA fully supports this work and therefore recommends WG1 to agree Proposal 2 Option 2 (page 4) adopting the wording of the 7th ATP -

“Liming Materials help to correct soil acidity (liming effect) and deliver the nutrients calcium and/or magnesium. Their capacity to neutralize soil acidity is indicated by the neutralizing value (NV)”

In conclusion, LMs are recognized universally by farmers, growers, environmental officers and land managers as singular, unique products matched to specific applications. As such, ALA recommends that for clarity and interpretation of future fertiliser regulation LMs should maintain their singular categorization.

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