

NEWS, NOTES & QUOTES



National Newsletter of the Mulch & Soil Council

April 2022

COUNCIL NEWS

CALL FOR BOARD TOPICS

The next meeting of the MSC Board of Directors will be May 12 by teleconference. Any member having a topic they wish to be considered by the Board should contact Executive Director Robert LaGasse at execdir@mulchandsoilcouncil.org by May 2.

###



SUPPLY CHAIN SURVEY REPORT ISSUED

In February, the MSC conducted a membership survey on supply chain issues. On March 9th, copies of the survey report were sent to the entire membership in hopes of providing some forewarning of what members could expect for supply chain issues this season. The report covers the following information comparing past supply costs and availability in 2021 to the same costs and activities in the first months of 2022:

1. Introduction
2. Where Respondent Facilities Are Located
3. Equipment Availability
4. Equipment Cost Increases
5. Shipping Costs
6. Pallet Supplies
7. Pallet Costs
8. Pallet Cost Recovery
9. Raw Materials Availability
10. Raw Materials Costs
11. Entry Level Drivers
12. Company CDL Training
13. Gasoline & Diesel Cost Increases



The last item in the survey report is on gasoline and diesel costs which are rising at record-setting speed to historic high rates. While the data for the report ends at March 7, a link is provided for members to monitor the latest information on both gasoline and diesel costs nationwide via the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA).

If you did not receive a copy of this survey report, members can download a PDF copy using the following website link: [CLICK HERE](#).

We thank the Industry Statistics and Transportation Committees for their direction and support for this survey, and we extend special thanks to all our members who took time from their busy schedules to share their information for the benefit of the industry.

We hope this report is helpful to members in their planning and response to changing market conditions for this season and beyond. As always, please let us know if you have any questions or need any assistance.

###

**ANNOUNCING:
2022 MSC
PLANT MANAGERS
TRAINING COURSE
ON W&M**



**Registration
Will Open in May**

At the January meeting of the Board of Directors, the Council staff was directed to develop a program for a 2022 Plant Managers Training Course on Weights & Measures and test member support for an in-person program in Las Vegas in August. In March, we conducted a straw survey of members to see if there was sufficient support to move forward and make the hotel and other commitments for a meeting.

The Council is pleased to report that member support for an in-person training course in Las Vegas was excellent, and we are putting the final arrangements together for our biennial Plant Managers Training Course on W&M. Here is a brief outline of our full-day program agenda:

**Plant Managers Training Course on W&M
The LINQ Hotel (Tentative)
August 24, 2022**

Preliminary Program Agenda

8:00a - 8:45a **NIST Regulations** - Product Definitions, Method of Sale, Average & Individual Package Requirements, Sampling Plans, Test Procedures, Inspection Lots, Random & Alternative Package Selection, Test Container Specifications. Instructor: Robert LaGasse, MSC, Shallowater, TX

8:45a - 9:15a **Penalties and Alternatives**- "Off Sale" & "Removal" Orders, Criminal & Civil Penalties, Detention and/or Arrest, Customer Disruption, Media Coverage & Brand Credibility, WAMIS Listing, Re-labeling, POP Signage, Discount to Packaged Quantity. Instructor: Robert LaGasse, MSC, Shallowater, TX

9:15a - 9:45a **Inspection Guidelines** - Manufacturer's Responsibilities, Inspector's Responsibilities, Retail Vs. Plant Inspections. Instructor: Robert LaGasse, MSC, Shallowater, TX

9:45a Break

10:00a - 10:30a **Conducting An Inspection** - Mulch & Soil Product Fill Test Demonstration, Reading & Recording Data. Instructor: Shelli Williams, MSC, Shallowater, TX

10:30a - 11:30a **Bulk Product** - Issues with Bulk Loads, Determining/Documenting, Loading Procedures, Customer Education. Instructor: Don Dugger, ScottsMiracle-Gro, Lawrenceville, VA

11:30a - 1:00p **Lunch on Your Own**

1:00p - 1:45p **Determining Target Fill Level** - Product Variability, Test Results on Mulch Run, Test Results on Soil Run, Target Fill. Instructor: Dr. Bill Fonteno, Emeritus Professor, NC State University

1:45p - 2:45p **Equipment Effects** - Product factors & effects, packaging materials effects, equipment operations and handling impacts (conveyors, dosing, filling), automated vs manual systems, testing & validation, maintenance schedules and effects, production tracking, personnel safety and staff training. Instructor: TBA, Hamer-Fischbein Div. of nVenia, Plymouth, MN

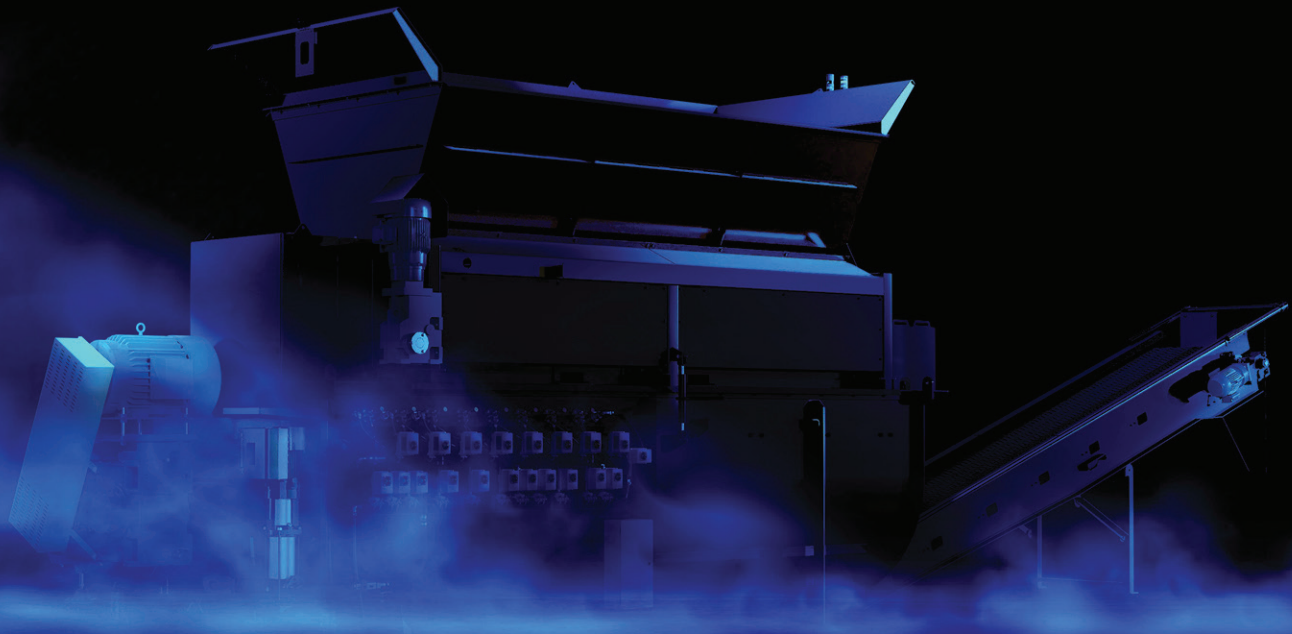
2:45p - 3:30p **Best Manufacturing Practices** - Setting Equipment, Determining Bag Size, Setting Line Speed, Quality Control Testing, Operator Training, Setting Lot Criteria and Lot Numbering, Record Keeping, Plant Inventory Control for Inspections. Instructor: Dr. Bill Fonteno, Emeritus Professor, NC State University

3:30pm - 4:45p **Labeling Guidelines & Issues** - What managers and designers need to know about package labeling to avoid fines and product "stop sale" penalties. Instructor: Robert LaGasse, MSC, Shallowater, TX

4:45p **Course Ends**



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TRAINING (CONT'D)

MSC is in the process of confirming conference and guest room agreements for this August 24 event that we expect to hold at the LINQ Hotel on Las Vegas Blvd. We are moving quickly to complete arrangements and *expect registration to open for this event before the end of May.*

We want to thank all the members who responded so quickly and positively to our straw survey, and we look forward to seeing everyone in Las Vegas for this important industry training program. If you have any questions, please contact Shelli Williams at membership@mulchandsoilcouncil.org.

###

51ST MSC ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS & EXHIBITS

On March 15th, sponsorship and exhibit opportunities opened for the *51st MSC Annual Meeting on October 4-6, 2022, in Charlotte, NC.* In a matter of just hours, 9 of the 11 sponsor opportunities were claimed by suppliers eager to support the Council's members and 16 of the 25 exhibit booth spaces were taken immediately.

The Mulch & Soil Council is grateful for the generous support of our Affiliate and Associate members. Their contributions help the Council expand our programs for the meeting while keeping member registrations low and accessible to the greatest number of industry representatives.

At this time, any Associate or Affiliate member interested in the 1 remaining sponsor event or one of the last 5 exhibit spaces should download the reservation form at: https://www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org/pdf/2022%20AnMtg_Charlotte/2022_Sponsor_FormFill_Flyer.pdf or contact Shelli Williams at membership@mulchandsoilcouncil.org.

###

THANK YOU To Our 2022 Annual Meeting Sponsors



LEGISLATIVE VIDEO AVAILABLE ON-LINE

REMINDER: Our post-conference session on "Everything You Need to Know About DC and How It Affects MSC Members" is still available online. Hear Ann Aquillo, Scotts Company's V.P. of Government Relations, discusses what is happening in legislation and politics, including the balance of power, in Washington with Jim Esquea, V.P. of Public Affairs for the Scotts Company.

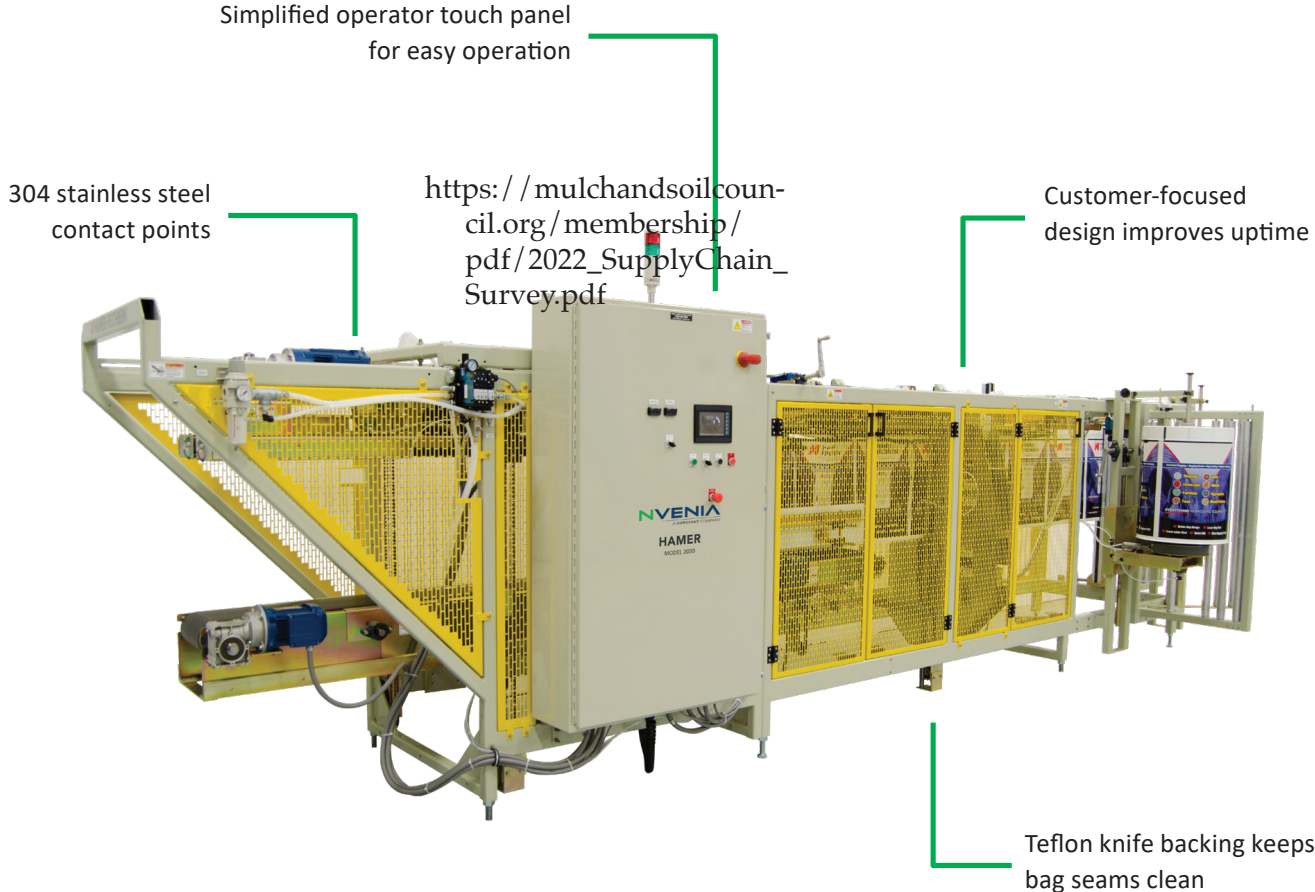
This 30-minute presentation takes a new look at what has happened since the annual meeting and at the start of 2022 and is available for viewing by ALL Council members by clicking on the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/678888522/01439ac550> .

We thank Ann Aquillo and Jim Esquea for taking time to share their decades of expertise on Capitol Hill politics and we also want to extend special thanks to our Program Chair Kimberly Rygielski for working so hard to complete the outstanding program for the Mulch & Soil Council's 50th Annual Meeting in Memphis last September.

###





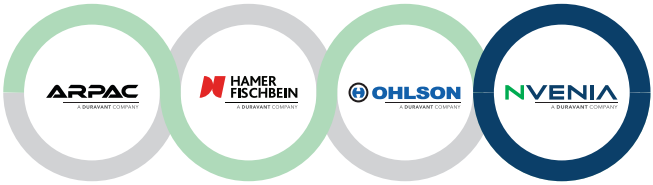
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FINAL CALL FOR HONORS NOMINATIONS



Volunteers are the essential engine that powers many programs and activities of the Mulch & Soil Council. From committees to the Board of Directors, the selfless service of members combines the business and industry knowledge of many individuals into a consensus-driven body of action. In the MSC, everyone who wants to constructively participate is welcomed to join our efforts to create a rising tide that lifts all boats.

The Mulch & Soil Council is grateful for all the tremendous contributions made by volunteers every year, and we thank everyone who has taken time to share their expertise for the benefit of all members and the industry at large.

Such was the case of John Leber who was the president of Swanson Bark and Wood Products and served the Council with distinction for many years as a director and as the Secretary / Treasurer until his untimely death in an industrial accident in 2015. As a memorial to John, the Board of Directors created a special, John Leber Distinguished Service Award to recognize an individual or organization that has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to advancing the objectives of the Mulch & Soil Council and / or the mulch and soil industry. Past recipients include:

- Dr. Bill Fonteno, NC State Univ. — for his exceptional work as the program director of the MSC Product Certification Program.
- Dr. Kathryn Louis, Sun Gro Horticulture — in recognition of many years of service as a director, committee chair and president of the Council and exceptional leadership as president of the Mulch & Soil Research Foundation.
- Steve Jarahian, Oldcastle Lawn & Garden — in recognition of his many years' service as director, program chair, Certification Committee chair and president of the Council.
- Steve Titko, The Scotts Company — in recognition of his many years' service to the Council as a director and chair of the Standards Committee

Call For Nominations

Eligibility: Nominations are open to individuals or organizations who are members of the Council at the time of nomination.

Qualifying Activities: The award is intended for any person or organization providing exceptional service to the Mulch & Soil Council in any of the following examples or similar activities:

- Leadership: as a director, committee member or other program participant of the Council.
- Advocacy: as a spokesman for the Council and / or the mulch and soil industry to the public or government.
- Training & Education: as a mentor sharing his or her expertise with other industry members for the improvement of the industry.

When: Distinguished service may be recognized for a single event / activity or for multiple years of service.

Where: The nominee shall reside within North America.

Nomination & Submission: The MSC Honors Committee shall provide vetted honors candidates to the MSC Board of Directors from nominations by its members or the MSC membership at large. A brief bio shall be included for each candidate.

Nominations Deadline: Nominations should be submitted to membership@mulchandsoilcouncil.org by May 2, 2022. Please include a statement on why the person or organization is being nominated.

###



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LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY NEWS



Effective immediately, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has added Boone and Winnebago Counties in Illinois to the list of quarantine areas for gypsy moth (GM). The moth populations in these counties have reached the threshold to trigger the quarantine expansion. Effective immediately, all interstate movement of GM-regulated articles (including mulch) from Boone and Winnebago Counties must be handled in accordance with the Federal Order and will require a phytosanitary certificate or an APHIS compliance agreement. Illinois is establishing a parallel state quarantine. Anyone sourcing materials from or producing products in these counties must now comply with the quarantine requirements. The full list of quarantine areas due to the continuing spread of GM are designated in the federal regulations located in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (C.F.R.) at 7 C.F.R. § 301.45-3 and the Federal Orders at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/gypsy-moth-quarantine>

###

EPA POSTS MALATHION, CHLORPYRIFOS & DIAZINON REVIEW



In March, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) posted for public comment the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) draft revised biological opinion (BiOp) for malathion, chlorpyrifos, and diazinon, three organophosphate insecticides commonly used to control foliage and soil insect pests.

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), EPA has a responsibility to ensure that its actions, including many pesticide registration actions, do not jeopardize ESA listed species, or destroy or adversely modify their designated critical habitats. When EPA determines in its biological evaluation that a pesticide's registration may affect these species or habitats, EPA must initiate consultation with NMFS, FWS, or both (the Services), as appropriate. In response, the Service(s) develop a BiOp that, among other things, determines whether the pesticide will jeopardize listed species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat, and if so, describes measures to avoid these prohibitions. EPA is then responsible for implementing the BiOp.

EPA and NMFS encourage public input on reasonable and prudent alternatives and reasonable and prudent measures. Specifically, NMFS is interested in comments regarding:

- Additional risk reduction options beyond those described in the BiOp;
- The general feasibility of drift reduction measures based on wind direction;
- The consideration of measures based on geographic boundaries for wide-area adult mosquito control;
- The existence of stewardship programs that may be considered for risk reduction credit; and
- Spray drift reduction technologies.

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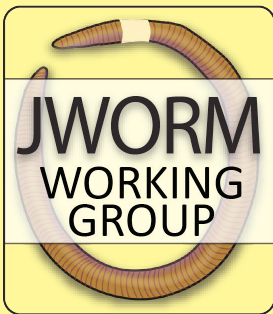
After the public comment period, EPA will provide NMFS with the comments received and a summary of the comments for consideration before it finalizes the BiOp. Once NMFS issues its final BiOp, EPA will implement the BiOp taking into account any identified reasonable and prudent alternatives. Additionally, as part of implementing the BiOp, EPA will address any necessary actions related to reasonable and prudent measures included in the final BiOp. The final BiOp is the last step in EPA's formal consultation process with NMFS.

EPA is also in consultation on these pesticides with FWS, and has received FWS's final BiOp for malathion. EPA plans to post this BiOp on its website in the next couple of weeks.

Public comments on NMFS's draft revised BiOp will be accepted for 60 days in docket [EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0172](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0172) at www.regulations.gov.

###

JUMPING WORMS UPDATE



A working group focused on Jumping Worm Outreach, Research & Management (JWORM) was formed in 2020 under the NY Invasive Research Institute. For more information, visit the JWORM website at: [CLICK HERE](#).

Previously, we reported that there was no known method of control or mitigation for jumping worms; however, JWORM reports in a meeting held at Cornell Univ. in 2020 that Early Bird fertilizer (commonly used on golf courses) may be an effective treatment for jumping worms. The effective ingredient is likely saponin which is a surfactant like soap, according to Professor Tim McCay at Colgate Univ. In the JWORM conference, it was demonstrated that impacts of jumping worms are not always bad in all cases; so Professor McCay asked if jumping worms are really worse for the environment than European invasives and the response was, "We don't know, really." To view the presentation: [VISIT HERE](#).

In a survey of NY state Master Gardeners, some "believed" they imported jumping worms into their garden with mulch, but that is unverified. It is more likely that plant swaps, which are a major activity in the gardening community, contribute more to spreading jumping worm infestations.

In another experiment reported by Associate Professor Kyle Wickings at Cornell Univ., samples of mulch and compost were placed next to golf course sod in a confined space. Jumping worms were introduced to the mulch and compost and after a short period, the worms were found to inhabit the sod and not the mulch or compost.

As more information is uncovered, we will bring it to your attention to help you respond to any customer or media questions that incorrectly point to mulch as a major medium for spreading invasive jumping worms.

###

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HHS POSTS NEW DRUG TESTING (DOT)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has reaffirmed, and in some cases tweaked, the agency's oral fluid and urine drug testing requirements for federal safety-sensitive government employees, *including truck drivers*.

In a pair of pre-published posts, totaling more than 300 pages, the agency guidance covered areas that ranged from what constitutes a refusal to take a drug test to the requirements laboratories must meet to conduct the outcome of a drug test.

Although urine testing for many years has been the only official method permitted for drug testing, the Department of Transportation proposed a plan in [February to adopt HHS drug testing guidelines](#) first approved in late 2019 that would permit truck drivers to be tested using oral fluid samples as an alternative to urine testing.

"This will give employers a choice that will help combat employee cheating on urine drug tests and provide a more economical, less intrusive means of achieving the safety goals of the program," DOT said Feb. 25 in the Federal Register announcement. "Unlike directly observed urine collections, an oral fluid collection is much less intrusive on the tested employee's privacy."

Public comments will be accepted through June 6.

In its proposal to adopt oral fluid testing, DOT said that when an employer determines that a post-accident or a reasonable cause-suspicion test is needed, oral fluid collections could be done at the scene of the accident or the incident. The collection could be done by any oral fluid collector qualified under federal regulations — either an external contractor or a DOT-regulated company employee, DOT said.

The guidance announced on April 7 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an HHS sub-agency, expressed concerns that the commercial substitution and adulteration products aimed at defeating a drug test continue to proliferate for both urine and oral fluid.

Other guidance changes or clarifications related to the drug testing included:

- The department revised a regulation to include a donor's refusal to wash their hands when directed to do so by the collector as an example of a refusal to test by failing to cooperate with the testing process, but did not include as a refusal a donor declining to empty his or her pockets when instructed by the sample collector.
- Concluded that research shows ingestion of prepared poppy seed food products will likely not cause a positive drug test.
- Concluded that planned timely changes to drug testing panels will result in a healthier and more productive workforce, as well as avoid the issues associated with addiction and rehabilitation.
- If donor is unable to provide an oral fluid specimen, the donor will be permitted to provide a urine sample.
- A collector will report a refusal to test for any donor who fails to appear in a reasonable time or who leaves the collection site before the collection is complete, regardless of the reason for the test.
- A regulatory change says that a physician's authorization or medical recommendation for a Schedule I substance is not an acceptable medical explanation for a positive drug test.
- Passive exposure to marijuana smoke and ingestion of food products containing marijuana are not acceptable medical explanations for a positive marijuana test result.

###

FMCSA DROPS TWO CDL PROPOSALS



Federal trucking regulators have withdrawn two proposals intended to streamline credentialing and testing processes for aspiring truck drivers to obtain their commercial driver licenses.

One proposal would have allowed states to permit third-party test examiners to administer the CDL skills test to applicants to whom the examiners also have provided skills training, a practice that will now continue to be prohibited under Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations.

FMCSA (Cont'd)



The agency originally argued that allowing states to permit the third-party practice may alleviate CDL skill testing delays, and reduce inconvenience and cost for third-party testers and CDL applicants without negatively impacting safety.

FMCSA said it received 95 comments on the third-party testing NPRM, ranging from trainers, testers and drivers to large industry trade organizations and state licensing agencies with the majority of commenters opposed, citing concerns about fraud, conflict of interest, or examiner bias. Opposition was generally concerned that allowing the same individual to train and test the applicant could undermine the integrity of the skills testing process, thereby negatively impacting safety.

The second proposal would have allowed applicants to take the CDL general and specialized knowledge tests in a state other than the applicant's state of domicile. The NPRM also proposed that the applicant's state of domicile would be required to accept knowledge test results from the testing state. When it originally posted the proposal, FMCSA argued that it could streamline the CDL application progress.

All state commenters said the proposal would require costly changes in current procedures for processing knowledge test results and issuing learner permits and coordinating procedures to accommodate reports from and to other states that are not currently done.

In separate Federal Register notices, FMCSA said that public comments persuaded the agency to withdraw both proposed rulemakings. The proposed third-party tester rule, published July 9, 2019, was withdrawn as of March 9, the notice said. The knowledge test proposal, published on July 29, 2019, also was withdrawn effective March 9.

###

UNDERRIDE LABELING CONTROVERSY



According to [Transportation Topics](#), the trucking industry is asking federal regulators for clarity about potential enforcement issues surrounding a new rule for annual inspection of rear underride guards on trailers.

In a March 25 letter to FMCSA, American Trucking Associations asked what would happen if labels that must be attached to trailers to certify that an underride guard complies with placement and strength requirements are lost, damaged or unreadable. The law mandating the inspections and labels took effect in December.

The letter noted that, at ATA's recent Technology & Maintenance Council Annual Meeting, fleets expressed concern that the final rule did not address a petition on the general labeling requirement filed by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA). The ATA letter also noted that trailers manufactured in Canada are not subject to this manufacturing requirement, and fleets would not be able to acquire labels for these trailers if they are operated within the U.S.

ATA said that rear underride guards are a manufacturing requirement, and labels are affixed at the point of manufacture. ATA also noted that rear underride guards that are in service and continue to meet operational inspection requirements cannot be 're-certified' because the manufacturer cannot verify the performance of used products. Therefore, fleets cannot acquire replacement labels for rear underride guards which otherwise meet inspection requirements. Due to the longevity of trailers and operations in difficult environments, these labels see substantial distress and it is not uncommon for damage or displacement to occur.

So far, the agency has not answered the question.

###

USDA FERTILIZER INITIATIVE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is announcing it will support additional fertilizer production for American farmers to address rising costs, including the impact of Russia's price hike on farmers, and spur competition. USDA will make available \$250 million through a new grant program this summer to support independent,



innovative and sustainable American fertilizer production to supply American farmers. Additionally, to address growing competition concerns in the agricultural supply chain, USDA will launch a public inquiry seeking information regarding seeds and agricultural inputs, fertilizer, and retail markets.



Fertilizer prices have more than doubled since last year due to many factors including Russia's price hike, a limited supply of the relevant minerals and high energy costs, high global demand and agricultural commodity prices, reliance on fertilizer imports, and lack of competition in the fertilizer industry.

The United States is a major importer and dependent on foreign fertilizer and is the second or third top importer for each of the three major components of fertilizer. The top producers of the major components of fertilizer include China, Russia, Canada and Morocco, with Belarus also providing a significant share of potash.

The new program will support fertilizer production that is:

- Independent – outside the dominant fertilizer suppliers, increasing competition in a concentrated market;
- Made in America – produced in the United States by domestic companies, creating good-paying jobs at home and reducing the reliance on potentially unstable or inconsistent foreign supplies;
- Innovative –improve upon fertilizer production methods to jump start the next generation of fertilizers;
- Sustainable – reduces the greenhouse gas impact of transportation, production, and use through renewable energy sources, feedstocks, formulations, and incentivizing greater precision in fertilizer use;
- Farmer-focused – like other Commodity Credit Corporation investments, a driving factor will be providing support and opportunities for U.S. agriculture commodity producers.

Details on the application process will be announced in the summer of 2022, with the first awards expected before the end of 2022.

###

COVID-19 POLICY AT THE BOARDSERS



COVID-19
INFORMATION
AND UPDATES

According to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) website which posts pending regulatory actions at the Office of Management & Budget (OMB), DHS sent a notification on travel restrictions between Mexico/Canada and the US. These postings do not have details and nothing is public until it clears the required OMB review and is published in the Federal Register, but it appears that the Administration plans to renew the vaccine requirement for legal border crossings instead of letting it expire. As you know, the Administration recently chose to extend the mask mandate for airplanes and other public transportation.

###

INDUSTRY NEWS

NEW AL PELLET MILL



Drax Group has opened a new pellet plant at Demopolis, Alabama. At full capacity the plant will produce 360,000 metric tons of biomass pellets a year. Including Demopolis, Drax operates seven pellet plants in the US south, which use biomass sourced from the region's sustainably managed working forests. The Demopolis and Aliceville pellet plants support Drax's plans to increase pellet production to meet growing demand in Europe and Asia for reliable, renewable electricity, which helps displace coal from energy systems, reducing emissions in line with global climate targets.

###

NEW MS PELLET MILL



Enviva Inc. announced it will invest approximately \$250 million in Bond, Mississippi, to build a new wood pellet production plant. The facility is a key component of the company's growth strategy to double production capacity from the current 6.2 million metric tons annually to approximately 13 million metric tons annually over the next five years. The facility site, directly off Highway 49 in Bond, was selected in close collaboration with Governor Tate Reeves, the Mississippi Development Authority, and Stone County officials.

The plant is fully contracted under long-term take-or-pay supply contracts with customers around the world, providing for durable, positive economic impact to the community. In addition to creating around 100 local jobs with wages projected to be approximately 70 percent higher than the county average, the Bond plant will generate more than \$1 million in taxes per year for the county and school district and deliver over \$250 million annually in economic impact in the region. Once operational, the plant will support more than 350 jobs, including those in related industries such as logging and transportation.

The new plant in Stone County joins two other Enviva facilities in Mississippi, one in Amory, which is Enviva's first production plant in the state, and the company's most recent manufacturing facility in Lucedale. The company also owns and operates a deep-water marine terminal at the Port of Pascagoula from which pellets are shipped to customers in Europe and Asia. Combined, Enviva's total investment in the Magnolia State is more than \$600 million and supports over 850 direct and indirect jobs in Mississippi.

Construction is expected to begin in early 2023, subject to receiving the necessary permits, and is expected to take approximately 18 months. The Bond plant is expected to have a production capacity of more than 1 million metric tons of wood pellets per year.

###

MORE RAW MATERIALS COMPETITION



Origin Materials Inc. announced the company has selected a site in Geismar, Louisiana, for the construction of its proposed Origin 2 facility, which would produce biobased materials and chemicals from wood residues. The Geismar facility aims to produce carbon-negative materials used to make polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic, which is used in packaging, textiles, apparel and other applications. The facility will also produce hydrothermal carbon, which can be used in fuel pellets, as activated carbon, and as a replacement for black carbon.

The plant is currently scheduled to be operational in mid-2025 at which time the facility would take in an estimated 1 million dry metric tons of wood residues annually as feedstock. A statement released by Louisiana Economic Development indicates that feedstock would be sourced partly from the state's timber mills and managed forests.

###

WOOD PELLETS CAN REPLACE GERMAN COAL



FutureMetrics LLC published a white paper in early March that discusses how the German power sector can use wood pellets to extend the operation of coal-fired power plants while reducing dependence on Russian natural gas and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The white paper outlines several advantages to replacing coal with wood pellet fuel, including the ability to sustain and create jobs in the fuel supply chain, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by generating on-demand or baseline power, avoid the creation of stranded assets, and lower the net cost of generation.

According to FutureMetrics, nearly 28 percent of Germany's gross power generation during the first 11 months of 2021 came from coal, with 15.3 percent from natural gas and 11.9 percent from nuclear. The white paper notes that 55 percent of Germany's current natural gas supply comes from Russia and indicates that all of the country's nuclear power plants are scheduled to go offline by the end of 2022. Under current

FUTUREMETRICS (Cont'd)

policy, Germany's coal-fired power plants are required to be retired by 2038. That deadline, however, is expected to be moved up to 2030. The white paper explains that the expectation has been that baseload generation will be supplied by natural gas-fired power plants, including new plants that could have the ability to switch to green hydrogen. A full copy of the white paper can be downloaded from the [FutureMetrics website](#).

###

WOKE FOR BUGS



The Entomological Society of America (ESA) announced a new common name for the gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) today replacing "gypsy moth" with "spongy moth" in their list of "Common Names of Insects and Related Organisms." This moth—and related *Lymantrid* species—are significant invasive forest pests. They can defoliate hundreds of species of trees and shrubs and harm our country's natural resources.

Apparently, the need to change the name of this insect is based on the woke belief that the term "gypsy" is demeaning and racist to people from Romania. Instead, the name "spongy moth" refers to the insect's distinctive spongy-textured egg masses. The egg mass part of this moth's life cycle is the life stage people are most likely to inadvertently move on outdoor items, which can lead to infestations in new areas. It is helpful to draw attention to the spongy-egg-mass stage in this pest's life cycle to raise public awareness and highlight the actions people can take to reduce its spread. Public outreach is critical to reducing this pest's impact and maintaining an effective regulatory program.

###

TFI ISSUES STATEMENT ON RUSSIA

The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) is concerned about the destabilizing situation occurring in the Ukraine. Its main concern is the safety of all the citizens in harm's way. Currently, it is unclear the exact magnitude and how the Russia-Ukraine conflict will affect the already-tight global market for fertilizer, but it will add additional pressure on a market that has already experienced many challenges over the last 18 months.



It has been implied that fertilizer companies may take advantage of the current situation, but that is far from the truth. The U.S. fertilizer industry is committed to serving farmers and makes it unequivocally clear that ensuring grower access to the nutrients needed to sustain people around the world is of the highest priority.

Because 90% of all fertilizer used is consumed outside the United States, the actions of Russia will impact the global market for fertilizer around the world. Russia is the second largest producer of ammonia, urea, and potash and the fifth largest producer of processed phosphates. In terms of their share of the global export market, Russia accounts for 23% of ammonia, 14% of urea, and 21% of potash, as well as 10% of processed phosphate exports. The conflict in the Ukraine will also put additional stress and uncertainty on energy markets. Russia supplies approximately one-third of Europe's natural gas, the main feedstock to produce nitrogen fertilizers.

Because of Russia's large fertilizer production and its role as a global fertilizer supplier, the removal of Russian product from the global marketplace will have an impact on supply. Despite the benefits afforded by a robust U.S.-based fertilizer industry, prices for U.S. products are driven by global supply and demand factors. There have been reports of misleading information regarding the applicability of U.S. sanctions to companies in the industry, and TFI strongly encourages companies to consult legal counsel for advice on sanctions-related issues at question.

###

SNAIL MAIL TO GET EVEN SLOWER



Some packages may soon take more time to arrive, the U.S. Postal Service said. Starting May 1, the standard time for about one-third of first-class packages will be one to two days longer. The change is expected to have the biggest impact on deliveries traveling long distances, such as those going from coast to coast, USPS said on its website. The change impacts first-class packages, which are meant to be small and lightweight.

Another 4% of those packages will be “upgraded from a three-day to two-day service standard,” officials said in an April 18 news release. There won’t be a change in delivery times for the other 64% of the deliveries. Officials said the new “standards will enable additional package volume to be transported by surface transportation, which is more reliable and affordable compared to air transportation.”

Also in its announcement, USPS said some shipping times could get faster. The change will cut one delivery day from goods being transported by ground through priority mail, an option that offers customers tracking on items with standardized, flat-rate packaging sent within the contiguous United States.

“The extra day was temporarily put in place in April 2020 to account for ongoing global supply chain, transportation and employee availability challenges across our network posed by the COVID-19 pandemic,” officials said in their news release. “Given the continued high demand on the overall air network, the Postal Service is retaining the extra day at this time for priority mail transported via air until the reliability of our key providers improves.”

USPS suggests people plan ahead and send first-class packages early, especially if they are traveling far or need to arrive by a certain date. Officials on their website also reassured customers that the changes won’t impact most packages.

###

WAIT TIMES FOR CHIP DELIVERIES GROW AGAIN



The wait times for semiconductor deliveries rose again in February, a sign that shortages are continuing to bedevil chip buyers in a wide range of industries. Lead times — the lag between when a chip is ordered and delivered — increased by three days to 26.2 weeks last month, according to research by Susquehanna Financial Group. In January, the group reported that delays were getting shorter, the first sign of improvement since 2019.

Though the lag times have now increased again, they aren’t growing quite as quickly as during much of 2021. But certain sectors were hit worse than others. Delivery times for micro-controllers reached a high of 35.7 weeks in February, according to Susquehanna’s research. Lead times also increased by a week-and-a-half for power-management components. Both are essential parts of many electronics, including car components.

The global shortage of semiconductors began in the first half of 2020, driven by pandemic-fueled demand for consumer technology and vehicles. The scarcity of chips has held back production of everything from smartphones to pickup trucks, leading to billions in lost revenue and contributing to inflation by raising costs.

The Biden administration said in January that it anticipated the shortage to continue until at least the second half of the year. Chip industry executives have cautioned that some chip users won’t be able to get all that they need until into 2023.

###

MEMBER NEWS

WAUPACA SELLS NORTHWOODS LLC

Randy Tyre, owner of Waupaca Northwoods LLC, recently announced the April 1st sale of a sister company, Northwoods Organics LLC to Premier Tech, a Canadian company. The Asset Purchase Sale included approximately 80 acres in Meadowlands, MN, which included the buildings and packaging operations. Also included was the lease of 2,300 acres of sphagnum peat bogs, of which 300 acres are under harvest production. Northwoods employees



Waupaca (Cont'd)

continued in a seamless transition to Premier Tech which has other bogs and plant facilities in nearby Cromwell, MN.

Mark Murphy, president of Premier Tech Growers and Consumers for North America, says "This acquisition enables us to increase our manufacturing capacity and continues to secure our strategic North American peat moss access. We will then be able to provide our clients with an even better service".

###

New Member Welcome

The Mulch & Soil Council is pleased to welcome our newest **Affiliate Member** company:

OEC Graphics, Inc
Contact: Jennifer Navin
555 W Waukau Ave
Oshkosh, WI 54902
jennifer.navin@oecgraphics.com
<https://www.oecgraphics.com/>

OEC is an expert in custom workflow management for packaging design, graphics, printers, converters and package management solutions. Please visit their website to learn more.

###

Certified Product News

CERTIFIED PRODUCT	
	Premium Potting Soil
	Standard Potting Soil
	Landscape Soil & Soil Amendment
	Specialty Soils
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mulch

This product has been registered and tested for conformance to the standards of the Mulch & Soil Council for the indicated product category. The Mulch & Soil standards do not contain a product category for pesticides, and this certification mark does not apply to pesticide claims. For more information, refer to the MSC website at www.mulchandsoilcouncil.org.

Recertified Products

Austin Wood Recycling, Ltd.
Austin Wood Recycling, Ltd.
Florida Mulch Inc.
Florida Mulch Inc.
Florida Mulch Inc.
Garick Corporation
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Sims Bark Co.
Sims Bark Co.
Sims Bark Co.
The Scotts Company
The Scotts Company
The Scotts Company
The Scotts Company
The Scotts Company
The Scotts Company

Mulch

Texas Native Black Label Mulch
Texas Native Rojo Red Hardwood Mulch
Gold Color Enhanced Mulch
Natural Environmental Mulch
Red Color Enhanced Mulch
Decorative Cedar Mulch Blend
Miracle-Gro Garden Mulch
Vigoro Premium Black Mulch by Sims Bark
Vigoro Premium Brown Mulch by Sims Bark
Vigoro Premium Red Mulch by Sims Bark
California Select Classic Black Mulch
California Select Forest Brown Mulch
California Select Sierra Red Mulch
Earthgro Decorative Groundcover Bark
Earthgro Decorative Hardwood Mulch
Scotts Nature Scapes Advanced Color Enhanced Mulch - Sierra Red

Landscape Soils

Black Gold Compost Company
Kellogg Garden Products
Kellogg Garden Products
Kellogg Garden Products
KSI (Kellogg)
KSI (Kellogg)
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Swiss Farms Products, Inc.
Black Velvet Mushroom Compost
All Natural Garden Soil for Flowers & Vegetables (Red)
Gardeners All Purpose Planting Mix
Kellogg All Natural Garden Soil for Trees, Shrubs & Roses
Gardeners Steer Manure
Gardeners Top Soil
Miracle-Gro In Ground Soil All Purpose 0.09-0.05-0.07
Miracle-Gro Performance Organics All Purpose In Ground Soil 0.13-0.02-0.02
Nature's Care Really Good Compost
Vigoro Enriched Lawn Soil 0.04-0.04-0.04

Premium Soils

Hyponex Corporation
Kellogg Garden Products
Kellogg Garden Products
Kellogg Garden Products
Hyponex by Scotts Moisture Potting Soil 0.07-0.01-0.03
Kellogg Palm, Cactus & Citrus
Kellogg Potting Soil
Kellogg Shade Mix

Certified Product News

Recertified Products

Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
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Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
Miracle-Gro Lawn Products, Inc.
The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company
The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company

Premium Soils

Miracle-Gro Expand 'N Gro Concentrated Planting Mix 0.45-0.15-0.30
Miracle-Gro Moisture Control Potting Mix 0.21-0.11-0.16
Miracle-Gro Organic Choice Moisture Control Pot Mix w/Compost 0.18-0.10-0.12
Miracle-Gro Performance Organics All Purpose Container Mix 0.19-0.03-0.03
Miracle-Gro Performance Organics Raised Bed Mix 0.11-0.02-0.02
Miracle-Gro Potting Mix 0.21-0.11-0.16
Miracle-Gro Seed Starter Potting Mix 0.07-0.05-0.07
Miracle-Gro Tropical Potting Mix 0.08-0.03-0.06
Nature's Care Organic Incredible Expanding Planting Mix 0.29-0.19-0.29
Miracle-Gro Houseplant Potting Mix 0.22-0.09-0.18
Miracle-Gro Succulent Potting Mix 0.11-0.05-0.08

Standard Horticultural Growing Media

Kellogg Garden Products Gardeners Potting Soil

New Certified Products

Landscape Soils

Miracle-Gro Lawn Products Miracle-Gro Garden Soil, Trees & Shrubs 0.09-0.05-0.07

Premium Soils

Terrace Brands Bonnie Harvest Select Organic Raised Bed Soil 0.12-0.06-0.09

Withdrawn Products

Mulch

Oldcastle Lawn & Garden, Inc. Vigoro Premium Black Mulch by B and B Bedding
Oldcastle Lawn & Garden, Inc. Vigoro Premium Brown Mulch by B and B Bedding
Oldcastle Lawn & Garden, Inc. Vigoro Premium Red Mulch by B and B Bedding

Landscape Soils

Miracle-Gro Lawn Products Miracle-Gro Garden Soil, Trees & Shrubs 0.09-0.05-0.07

Decertified Products

Mulch

Landscape Products, Inc. Colorwise Black Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Colorwise Brown Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Colorwise Gold Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Colorwise Red Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Cypress Blend
Landscape Products, Inc. Earthwise Hemp Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Earthwise Mulch
Landscape Products, Inc. Pine Bark Nuggets

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CERTIFICATION AUDIT TEAM TRAVELS TO SOUTHEAST REGION

In late March, MSC's certified products audit team of Carol Ledbetter and Lonny Nelson headed for the Southeast U.S. to collect over 162 product samples from retail outlets or ready-to-ship pallets at manufacturing plants. The process took 5 days and covered over 1,200 miles.

The Council extends its thanks to all the member company representatives who help the team gather samples and ship test materials around the country.

See photo spread on next pages...





**CERTIFICATION
AUDIT TEAM
TRAVELS SOUTHERN
REGION**

In early April, MSC's certified products audit team of Carol Ledbetter and JC McGowan headed for the Southern U.S. to collect over 72 product samples from retail outlets or ready-to-ship pallets at manufacturing plants. The process took 5 days and covered over 1,700 miles through Texas and Louisiana.

The Council extends its thanks to all the member company representatives who help the team gather samples and ship test materials around the country.







MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

**2022 Plant Managers
Training Course on
Weights & Measures
Las Vegas, NV
August 24, 2022**



**51st MSC Annual Meeting
Hilton Uptown Hotel
Charlotte, NC
October 4-6, 2022**

