

Digital labelling of EU fertilising products

2023/0049(COD) - 27/02/2023 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to improve the readability of the labels of EU fertilising products and to facilitate the management of such labels by the economic operators.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: Annex III to Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 lays down the labelling requirements applicable to EU fertilising products. The form in which EU fertilising products are labelled in accordance with that Regulation should be adapted to technological and societal changes in the field of digitalisation.

There are clear advantages to providing information on a label in digital form. Digital labelling can: (i) improve the communication of labelling information both by avoiding overcrowded physical labels and by allowing users to rely on various reading options available only for digital formats; (ii) contribute to the ongoing progress with regard to digitalisation of the European agricultural sector; (iii) facilitate the reporting obligations of farmers regarding the use of such products; (iv) lead to a more efficient management of the labelling obligations by economic operators; (v) contribute to reducing labelling costs all along the supply chain.

The current difficult political and economic context speaks in favour of, firstly, accelerating the existing trend of improving the use efficiency of fertilising products and, secondly, streamlining the costs of bringing fertilising products to the market. This proposal supports both trends in the fertilising products policy.

This proposal feeds into the broader digitalisation process of the agricultural sector, a priority for most Member State who signed a declaration for ‘a smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas’ on 9 April 2019.

CONTENT: the proposal introduces **voluntary digitisation of the labels of EU fertilising products**. The choice is with the manufacturers, importers or distributors of EU fertilising products.

Under the proposal, economic operators would be allowed to provide all the labelling elements required under Annex III to Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 only in a digital format in the following two situations: the EU fertilising products are sold without a packaging, or the EU fertilising products are sold to economic operators (which are not end-users of the products).

The economic operators opting for the digital labelling of EU fertilising products supplied to end-users in packaging will have to provide also a physical label, containing the most important information. The physical label will contain all the information concerning the protection of human health and the environment, as well as the most important information on the agronomic efficiency and content of the product, or information used after purchase.

The proposal lays down the **general rules regarding the digitisation of labels**. In particular, the economic operators will have to ensure that the digital label can be accessed free of charge and is easily accessible all over the EU, and they will have to take into account the needs of vulnerable population groups.

The Commission may adopt delegated acts to supplement the general digital labelling requirements and further adapt Annex III by deciding which labelling elements could be provided digitally when EU fertilising products are made available to end-users in packaging, depending on the evolution of the society.