

Frequently Asked Questions on Fertilisers

1. What is an EC fertiliser?

A fertiliser (*a material which mainly provides nutrients for plants*) belonging to a type of fertilisers listed in [Annex I of Regulation \(EC\) No 2003/2003](#) and complying with the conditions laid down in these Regulations, may be designated 'EC fertiliser'; thus these can circulate freely within the Community.

2. What are inorganic fertilisers?

Inorganic fertilisers include those fertilisers in which the declared nutrients are in the form of minerals obtained by extraction or by physical and/or chemical industrial processes. The following are 3 types of inorganic fertiliser:

- i. 'Straight fertiliser' - a nitrogenous, phosphatic or potassic fertiliser having a declarable content of only one of the primary nutrients.
- ii. 'Compound fertiliser' - a fertiliser having a declarable content of at least two of the primary nutrients and obtained chemically or by blending (*obtained by dry mixing of several fertilisers, with no chemical reaction*) or by a combination of both.
- iii. 'Complex fertiliser' - a compound fertiliser, obtained by chemical reaction, by solution, or in its solid state by granulation, having a declarable content of at least two of the primary nutrients. In its solid state each granule contains all the nutrients in their declared composition.

3. In what form are fertilisers purchased?

Fertilisers are found in their fluid form - that is in solution or in suspension.

4. Which nutrients are present within the composition of fertilisers?

There are 3 types of nutrients that might be present in the composition of fertilisers. These include:

- i. Primary nutrients - the elements nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) only;
- ii. Secondary nutrient - the elements calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), sodium (Na) and sulphur (S); &
- iii. Micro-nutrients - the elements boron (B), cobalt (Co), copper (Cu), iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), molybdenum (Mo) and zinc (Zn); *essential for plant growth in quantities that are small compared with those of primary and secondary nutrients.* The micro-nutrients can be chelated or complexed.

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5. Is there any compulsory identification marking that should be present on EC fertilisers?

The manufacturer shall provide the packages, labels and accompanying documents of EC fertilisers with the following markings:

- i. The words 'EC FERTILISER' in capital letters;
- ii. Where it exists, the designation of the type of fertiliser as set out in [Annex I of the Regulation](#);
- iii. For blended fertilisers, the marking 'blend' after the designation of the type;
- iv. The following shall be stated after the type designation of compound fertilisers:
 - a) The chemical symbols of the declared secondary nutrients, between brackets and after the symbols of the primary nutrients.
 - b) Numbers indicating the primary nutrient content. The declared secondary nutrient content shall be indicated between brackets after the primary nutrient content.
- v. The fertiliser type designation shall only be followed by figures indicating primary and secondary nutrient content.
- vi. Where micro-nutrients are declared, the words 'with micronutrients' or the word 'with' followed by the name or names and chemical symbols of the micro-nutrients present shall be given.
- vii. The declared content of primary nutrients and secondary nutrients shall be given as a percentage by mass, as whole numbers or, where necessary, where an appropriate method of analysis exists, to one decimal place.
- viii. The forms and solubility of the nutrients shall also be expressed as a percentage by mass of fertiliser, except where [Annex I](#) explicitly provides that this content shall be otherwise expressed.
- ix. Nutrients shall be indicated both in words and by the appropriate chemical symbols, e.g. nitrogen (N), calcium oxide (CaO), etc.
- x. Also micro-nutrients may be indicated; the name of the micro-nutrient shall be followed by 'chelated by' or 'complexed by'.
- xi. The specific directions for use;
- xii. Quantities of fluid fertilisers, expressed by mass; &
- xiii. The name or trade name and the address of the manufacturer.

6. What are the labelling requirements?

The labels or markings printed on the package must be placed in a conspicuous position. Labels must be attached to the package or to whatever system is used for closing it. If this system consists of a seal, that seal must bear the name or mark of the packager.

In the cases of fertilisers in bulk a copy of the documents containing the identification markings must accompany the goods and be accessible for inspection purposes.

All these information must appear in at least the national language or languages of the Member State in which the EC fertiliser is marketed.

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7. What language/s is/are accepted on EC fertilisers marketed in Malta?

The label, the markings on the package and the accompanying documents must appear in at least *one* of the following languages: Maltese, English, Italian.

Disclaimer: This document has been produced for information purposes only and is not in any respect a legal interpretation of the Regulations concerning Fertilisers.

