

Moving Forward

By Russel Taylor, President

The HPTA is the voice of the humic substances industry because of the involvement of our members. A big thank you is due to all the members who are working hard on our board and committees. In 2014, we made significant inroads in our regulatory goals. Our humic substances standardized test method was published, AAPFCO definitions have been updated, and our animal feed petition was filed and published in the Federal Register for comment.

Our efforts into these technical areas have laid the foundation for broader marketing opportunities for our members. Looking forward, HPTA will continue to support the technical goals and begin to transition focus to promoting humic substances. In 2015, our goal is to promote our membership more, adding marketing value to members and increasing HPTA awareness. These goals coincide with feedback we received regarding areas of focus in our Annual Meeting follow-up survey.

Another benefit of HPTA membership that we are working hard to promote is the HPTA membership directory. Did you know the HPTA membership directory is the

most visited section of the HPTA website? The membership directory receives several hundred of visits from multiple countries monthly. The directory is a resource for those seeking reputable companies to buy product from.

In addition to bolstering our online presence, HPTA also actively promotes the membership directory at trade shows with hopes of introducing new clients to our members and their products.

Our association hopes to educate those who have not yet used humic substances, with the goal of bringing a positive image to consumers who are just learning about their uses and benefits. While our association is young, we are preparing and planning for bigger things to come. The humic substance industry is forecasted to double in the next four years in agriculture. We are preparing to make sure our membership's voice is heard.



2015 Board of Officers

Familiar faces and one new member make up the 2015 HPTA board of officers. Russell Taylor will again tackle presidential duties this year and Steve Azzarello will occupy the vice president's chair. Cherie Harms continues as secretary/treasurer. Dan Olk and Lyndon Smith remain seated; Olk as science advisor and Smith as a member at large. HPTA is proud to welcome David Chinn as its newest at large board member. As always, the officers invite all comments and feedback from HPTA membership regarding how to better accomplish our goals toward the further promotion and public education of the humic products industry. Please feel free to let us know your thoughts and ideas. Contact information for all of the officers may be found on our website at www.humictrade.org



Russell Taylor
President



Steve Azzarello
Vice President



Cherie Harms
Secretary/Treasurer



David Chinn
Member at Large



Lyndon Smith
Member at Large



Dan Olk
Science Advisor

AAPFCO Update

By Lawrence Mayhew



For the past five years, Humic Products Trade Association (HPTA) has been working on the official terms and definitions through the American Association of Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO) to open up trade for humic products in the United States. All of this regulatory work has been contingent upon the official approval of a standardized analytical method for humic substances.

The analytical procedure developed jointly by the HPTA and the International Humic Substances Society (IHSS) has been approved by AAPFCO as the only officially recognized procedure for the analysis of humic acids and a specific category of fulvic acids. The procedure has been published in the Journal of AOAC International, a peer reviewed scientific journal, and is currently being reviewed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as a possible international analytical standard.

As regulators are either unaware or reluctant to adopt the new standardized analytical method, HPTA member companies are competing with other companies that are using invalid data to support label claims for humic and fulvic acids. Many companies and regulators are still using the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) method for humic acid analysis, which reports ash, contaminants, and adulterants as humic acids.

Olk receives HPTA Award at annual meeting

Dan Olk was recognized for his continuous technical leadership at HPTA, which has been a pillar of support since its founding in 2010. Olk is one of HPTA's founding members and has been instrumental in driving the science behind the method development, interfacing with the IHSS (International Humic Substances Society) on HPTA's behalf, and performing and collating scientific data and meta-studies to bring forward quality science which is key to HPTA's mission. He also helped HPTA navigate regulatory issues in conjunction with Lawrence Mayhew. Olk has also been a good friend and trusted advisor to many members during this time as well. We recognized him as a founder, devotee of our mission and success, and friend and ally of HPTA. We all hope he continues with us for many years to come.

Past award recipients are Dr. Paul Bloom, Lawrence Mayhew and Steve Azzarello

AAPFCO Official Terms

HPTA has successfully petitioned AAPFCO for the modification of previously flawed terms, T-64 Humic Acids and T-65 Humates. The improved AAPFCO approved the terms were published in the AAPFCO Official Publication in 2014.

T-64 Humic Acids are the portions of the alkali extracted humic substances that are insoluble in strongly acidic solution. They will precipitate from the alkali extract in acid solutions of pH 2 or less. They can be used as either soil amendments, foliar applications, or blended with liquid fertilizers.

T-65 Humates are the salts of humic acids.

In February of this year, AAPFCO officially approved the terms T-99 Humic Substances, T-100 Fulvic Fraction, and BSC-6 Hydrophobic Fulvic Acids. The T-99 term expands the market place for humic products by describing the various materials that are used to make humic products. The T-100 term is essentially the old definition for fulvic acids, which is defined as all the soluble materials that are extracted from humic substances at any pH. However, there are many substances that fall into that definition.

The *Beneficial Substances or Compounds* (BSC) designation is a new AAPFCO category for materials that clearly have a benefit to crops but are not essential nutrients. The AAPFCO definition of hydrophobic fulvic acids is intended to distinguish these materials from other non-humic substances that are part of the fulvic fraction. Hydrophobic fulvic acids may be a portion of a broad continuum of fulvic acids; a question that needs further investigation to resolve.

Also in February, Lawrence Mayhew represented the HPTA at the AAPFCO Methods Forum. The forum is a two day event where chemists from both State regulatory laboratories and from industry met to review existing and proposed methods of analysis. HPTA took advantage of the opportunity to inform all present as to what commercial humic substances are and how to analyze them. The presentation was well received, and judging by the numerous questions and positive comments presented by the audience, it appears that the analytical community supports our efforts.

For additional information from Lawrence Mayhew, HPTA members can find the complete update in the *Members Only* section of the website at humictrade.org.

Analytical Method Update — States Revise Humic Acid Regulation

In a grass roots level initiative, HPTA President Russell Taylor has taken the lead in contacting and working with state officials, encouraging them to adopt and conform to AAPFCO guidance regarding standardized testing. Over the last five years, the HPTA has worked with the AAPFCO to establish standardized analytical methods for humic and fulvic acids for commercial humic products. This is a key step in attaining approval from State and Federal Regulators..

Progress is being made at the State level. The state of **Wisconsin** recently indicated that they are considering updating their laws to conform to the AAPFCO guidelines. In addition, **North Dakota** expressed interest and is thought to be cooperative as well. Both **California** and **Oregon** have requested additional information regarding the testing guidelines. While we are optimistic about the future, some states, specifically **Colorado** and **Idaho** are not ready to change current rules regulating humic acids.

The push for a standardized testing method will continue to be key initiative for the HPTA for the coming year.

HPTA Test Method Certification Mark

The HPTA is proud to announce that it has filed for a Federal certification mark for members to use on their products. The purpose of the certification mark is to indicate to consumers that the HPTA standardized test for humic acid and fulvic acid has been used on a product.

Consumers can buy products bearing the HPTA certification mark with confidence knowing the products is held to a higher standard of analysis and is free of adulterants. The seal will also indicate to regulators that a product is conforming to AAPFCO standard test method for humic acid and fulvic acid. This mark can only be used on products that were analyzed using the HPTA test method.

A complete updated Style Guide, including the new mark and HPTA member logo will be available in the *Members Only* section of the HPTA website later in 2015. It will describe how the HPTA Method Certified mark and can be properly used and proudly displayed on products.

David Chinn joins Board

David Chinn was elected to the HPTA board of officers at the 2014 Annual Meeting. He is Vice President of Corporate Compliance for Monty's Plant Food Co., a \$10 million international manufacturer of plant and soil products. He oversees state registrations and reporting for Monty's products, and represents Monty's at a variety of agricultural organizations and governmental agencies. We welcome David and look forward to working with him. We also want to take this opportunity to thank Craig Dick for his years of service to the HPTA organization.



HPTA Annual Meetings held in conjunction with ARA Conference

HPTA members and guests gathered in New Orleans on December 2, 2014 for their annual meeting, held in conjunction with the Agriculture Retailers Association Conference. Following the meeting, HPTA exhibited at the ARA Expo.

During the general meeting, the audience heard reports from President Russell Taylor on the State of the Association and Vice President Steve Azzarello on membership and finance. The Marketing and Science Committees both reported on the many activities their committees focused on in 2014. Secretary/Treasurer Cherie Harms conducted Board elections.

Of special interest to the audience were updates regarding progress with the AAPFCO, supported humic label claims, and the federal filing of the Animal Feed Petition. The audience heard informative presentations from Dr. Paul Bloom, Dr. Mir M. Seyedbagheri, and Dr. Dan Olk.

The afternoon concluded with a lively roundtable on the topic of International Humic Substance Society (IHSS) and industry collaboration. Follow-up surveys confirmed that meeting attendees felt the meeting content was informative and appreciated the Board's efforts on all HPTA initiatives.

Plan on joining us for the 2015 Annual HPTA Meeting. It is scheduled for November 30 – December 1, also in conjunction with the ARA Conference, to be held at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, California. Additional information coming soon.

HPTA members can find past Annual Meeting presentation materials in the *Members Only* section of the website.

