

# **Unveiling the Power of Alfalfa-Based Organic Fertilizers for Vintners January 2024**

## **1. Introduction:**

Fertilizers are pivotal in modern agriculture, ensuring soil fertility and promoting crop yield. However, the environmental implications of chemical fertilizers have led to the exploration of sustainable alternatives. As the demand for organic products and sustainable farming solutions rises, distributors are at the forefront of this rapidly growing industry. Those dealing in organic growing products stand to benefit immensely from the surge in alfalfa-based fertilizers.

## **2. Definition of Organic Fertilizer:**

Our alfalfa-based fertilizers are derived from plant sources and, sometimes, naturally occurring organic minerals. In fertilizers, organic generally implies that the material is not synthetically manufactured and is free from prohibited substances or methods. To be approved as an organic fertilizer according to the Organic Standards of Canada is an additional step we take to ensure our ingredients are approved and regulated by the Canadian Organic Regime.

Synthetic and uncertified organic fertilizers are often chemically engineered or heavily processed, typically from non-renewable resources. They may provide precise nutrient compositions and may be faster-acting. Still, they usually cause soil degradation in the long term, or their production and processing methods may be harmful to the environment.

## **3. Historical Context:**

Historically, ancient civilizations relied on organic material for crop nourishment. With industrialization, inorganic fertilizers gained prominence. With a renewed focus on sustainability, organic fertilizers are regaining traction. In Canadian agriculture, practices like crop rotation and green manuring using plants like alfalfa have been long-standing traditions before synthetic fertilizers became prevalent.

## **4. Benefits of Alfalfa-based Organic Fertilizers:**

a) Completely All-natural: Alfalfa-based organic fertilizer pellets are made from premium organic ingredients, which means they are free from all chemicals or synthetic materials.



- b) Slowly Release the Nutrients: Made from alfalfa, our fertilizers release nutrients slowly over time. This slow-release feature ensures a steady and sustained supply of plant nutrients.
- c) Free from Synthetic Chemicals and Harmful Substances: our fertilizers are environmentally friendly during the production phase and end-use application.
- d) Contributes to Long-term Soil Health: Improves soil health, resulting in better plant growth, reduces the risk of diseases, and promotes resilience.
- e) Reduces Chemical Dependency: An excellent choice for those wishing to reduce or eliminate chemical fertilizers, contributing to a more sustainable and eco-friendly approach to soil and healthy plants.
- f) Enhances Root Development: It contains essential plant growth hormones and vitamins that promote root development, allowing plants to access water and nutrients, leading to healthier growth.
- g) Packed with Nutrients: It contains natural nitrogen, an essential nutrient for plant growth and crucial for promoting healthy foliage and overall plant development.
- h) Makes Soil Healthier: Improves soil structure and enhances its ability to retain water and nutrients. The organic matter in the pellets improves soil aeration and drainage.
- i) Increases Microbial Activity: Encourages beneficial microbial activity in the soil, vital in breaking down organic matter into plant-available nutrients, fostering a healthy soil ecosystem.
- j) Improves the Health and Quality of Plants: The balanced nutrient content supports robust plant growth, leading to healthy, more vigorous plants with improved yield and resistance to pests and diseases.
- k) Promotes Biodiversity: Organic gardening practices promote biodiversity by supporting diverse beneficial organisms in the soil and surrounding environment.



- l) Sequesters Carbon from Our Atmosphere: The alfalfa forage used to create our products contributes to a cleaner environment by sequestering carbon throughout its growth cycle.

## **5. Nutrient Profile of Alfalfa-based Organic Fertilizer Pellets:**

- a) Macro-Nutrients: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, Sulfur
- b) Micro-Nutrients: Sodium, Manganese, Iron, Boron, Copper, Zinc, Vitamin A, Choline, Niacin, Riboflavin, Biotin, Pyridoxine, Thiamin, Vitamin B12, Vitamin E
- c) Amino Acids: Arginine, Histidine, Leucine, Methionine, Threonine, Tyrosine, Cystine, Isoleucine, Phenylalanine, Tryptophan, Valine
- d) Plant Growth Hormone: Triacantanol

## **6. Manufacturing process:**

- a) Drying and Processing: Locally grown premium organic alfalfa is brought in from the field and flash-dried to maintain peak quality. Once dried, the alfalfa is ground into a fine powder and formed into 4mm pellets.
- b) Additional ingredients: Depending on the product being manufactured, additional organic materials such as rock phosphate or sulphate of potash may be mixed with the ground alfalfa.
- c) Pelletizing: The mixture is then fed into a pellet mill. Rollers press the alfalfa mixture inside the mill through a die that shapes it into small, uniform pellets. The pressure and friction generated during this process also produce heat, which helps in binding the pellets together.
- d) Packaging and Storage: The finished pellets are packaged in bags or bulk containers, ready for distribution. Proper storage ensures quality and gives the pellets a shelf life of many years.



## 7. Suitability:

Growing chemical-free vitis vinifera (the common grape vine) produces excellent yields and flavours and is also good for the environment. The conventional fertilizer markets have created several synthetic formulae and processes that have yielded superior outcomes. However, returning to our origins produces the best-quality blooms and the healthiest plants.

Growing grape organically entails growing the vines naturally. Native wild grape vines thrive in the wild across the world. This demonstrates that good soil and biodiversity are all that are required to enable the establishment of healthy and productive plants.

One key component that influences the quality of organic grape vines is soil health. Healthy living soil can help prevent nutritional deficiencies, insect problems, and general plant issues.

Organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are an excellent choice for fertilizing vines due to their balanced nutrient profile and slow-release properties. Here's why they are particularly suitable:

- a) **Nutrient Profile:** Alfalfa is a legume naturally high in nitrogen, which is crucial for the vegetative growth of plants like grape vines. It also contains over 30 trace minerals and other nutrients like phosphorus, potassium, and calcium, all essential for plant health and flowering.
- b) **Slow-Release:** The pellet form of alfalfa-based fertilizers ensures a slow release of nutrients, which is beneficial for grape vines that require a steady supply of nutrients over time rather than a quick burst. This eliminates nutrient burn, which can quickly occur with synthetic fertilizers.
- c) **Soil Structure:** Organic matter in alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets helps improve soil structure. This is particularly advantageous for grape vines, which thrive in well-aerated soil that allows for good root growth.
- d) **Microbial Activity:** The organic matter in pellets encourages microbial activity in the soil. These microbes benefit grapevine growth as they help make nutrients available to the plant and protect against soil pathogens.



- e) Environmentally Friendly: Organic fertilizers like those made from alfalfa are renewable and do not contribute to chemical runoff, which can be important for growers looking for sustainable cultivation methods.
- f) Grape vines thrive in slightly acidic soil, with a pH between 5.5 and 8.0. With a pH of 6.2, alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are considered a buffer, which means they will improve soils too far at either end of the pH scale.
- g) Versatility: Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can be used with various varieties.
- h) Growth Hormones: Alfalfa contains natural growth hormones, such as triacontanol, which can stimulate growth in grape vines, leading to more vigorous growth and potentially higher yields.

## **8. Application Instructions:**

Nothing could be easier when it comes to fertilizing with alfalfa-based pellets.

- a) Soil Preparation: Before planting or starting the growing season, incorporate the pellets into the soil at 100 g (1/2 cup) per 4.5 L (1 gallon) of soil, per the manufacturer's recommendations. This initial application will provide a nutrient-rich foundation supporting the vine through its early growth stages.
- b) Bud Break: At this stage, the vines are coming out of dormancy, and new buds are starting to swell and break. Additional fertilizer is usually unnecessary if the initial blending is done correctly.
- c) Leaf Development: As the leaves develop and photosynthesis begins, the vine will require more nutrients. A light application of alfalfa pellets can support this new growth, especially if the soil test indicates a need for more nutrients.
- d) Flowering and Fruit Set: During this critical phase, the plant's energy is focused on flower development and fruit setting. A balanced nutrient supply is essential, but over-fertilization should be avoided, which could lead to excessive vegetative growth at the expense of fruit development.



- e) Berry Growth: As the fruit develops, the vine requires a steady supply of nutrients. Depending on the growth, a small amount of alfalfa pellets may be applied to support this stage.
- f) Veraison: This is the onset of ripening when the berries change colour and sugar levels rise. Nutrient demands are high, but careful consideration is required as excessive nitrogen can delay ripening. At this point, alfalfa-based fertilizer is typically not applied to avoid promoting vegetative growth.
- g) Harvest: No fertilization is done at harvest. The focus is on picking the ripe grapes.
- h) Senescence and Leaf Fall: As the vine prepares for dormancy, the nutrients are translocated to the roots. Adding fertilizer here is not advisable as the vine will not benefit from it, and excess nutrients can leach into the environment.
- i) Winter Reprise: During winter, the vine is dormant, and fertilizing is unnecessary because the vine cannot uptake nutrients during this period.
- j) Dormancy: The vine is not actively growing throughout the dormant period, so no fertilization is needed. This is a good time for soil testing to plan for the next growing season's fertilization needs.
- k) Application Method: Pellets can be broadcast on the soil surface around the plants and then gently worked into the top inch of soil. Water the area well after applying the pellets to help start the breakdown process and allow nutrients to seep into the soil.
- l) Watering Regimen: Maintain a consistent watering schedule to keep the soil moist but not waterlogged.
- m) Monitoring Plant Response: Watch your plants closely for signs of nutrient deficiencies or excesses.

Remember, these are general guidelines. The exact application rates and frequency can vary based on the condition of your soil, the vine varietal, and the environment.



## 9. Methods of Application:

Applying organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets is a straightforward process. Here's how to do it effectively:

- a) **Top-Dressing:** This method involves spreading the pellets directly onto the soil surface around the vines. It's a standard application method for slow-release fertilizers like alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets.
  - Gently scatter the recommended amount of pellets evenly around the base of each plant, avoiding direct contact with the stems.
  - Work the pellets lightly into the top layer of the soil without disturbing the roots.
  - Water the soil after applying the pellets to help them break down and release nutrients into the soil.
  
- b) **Pre-Mixing with Soil:** You can mix alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets into the soil before planting.
  - Calculate the amount of fertilizer needed based on the size of your planting area and the recommendations on the fertilizer packaging.
  - Mix the pellets thoroughly with the potting soil or the soil in your garden bed to ensure even distribution.
  
- c) **Brewing Tea:** Another method is to compost tea with alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets, which can then be used to water the plants.
  - Soak the pellets in water for 24-48 hours to create a nutrient-rich tea.
  - Use the liquid to water your grapevine plants.
  - The remaining undissolved material can be spread around the plants to boost the soil further.
  
- d) **Side-Dressing:** This method can be used during the growing season to boost plants' nutrients.
  - Apply the pellets alongside the rows of plants or around individual plants, forming a band several inches from the base to avoid stem contact.
  - Water the area to help the pellets break down.
  
- e) **Incorporation into the Soil:** You can incorporate alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets directly into the soil for a new garden bed or when repotting plants.



- Mix the pellets with the soil at the recommended rate before planting the grapevine.
  - Ensure the pellets are evenly distributed throughout the soil.
- f) Frequency of Application: Organic alfalfa-based pellets can be re-applied every 2-4 weeks during the growing season. The frequency can depend on the growth stage of the grapevine plants, with more frequent applications during the vegetative stage when plants are actively growing leaves and stems.

Using these methods, organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can sustain nutrient release to your grapevine plants, supporting healthy growth throughout their lifecycle. Remember that each grapevine strain might have different nutrient needs, and adjust your fertilization practices accordingly.

### **10. Compatibility with Other Products:**

When integrating organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets into a grapevine cultivation regimen, compatibility with other products is essential to ensure plant health and optimize growth. Here are some compatibility considerations:

- a) Soil Amendments: Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can be used with other organic soil amendments such as worm castings, bat guano, or compost. These products can enhance the soil's nutrient profile and microbial life, working synergistically with the alfalfa-based fertilizer to improve soil health and fertility.
- b) Pest and Disease Control Products: Ensure pest and disease control products are compatible with organic cultivation practices. Some organic pesticides or fungicides can be directly applied to the soil and should not adversely affect the beneficial properties of alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets.

### **11. Safety Considerations:**

When using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets for grapevine cultivation, it is essential to consider safety and storage to ensure both the effectiveness of the fertilizer and the safety of those handling it. Here are some key points:





- a) **Safe Handling:** Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are typically safe to handle but can be dusty. Always handle with care to avoid creating airborne dust that can irritate.
- b) **Child and Pet Safety:** Store pellets out of reach of children and pets. Even though the pellets are organic, they are not meant for consumption and can pose a choking hazard or cause digestive upset.

## **12. Storage Considerations:**

- a) **Moisture Control:** Store alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets in a cool, dry place to prevent them from absorbing moisture from the air. Moisture can lead to mould growth and nutrient degradation.
- b) **Pest Prevention:** Keep the storage area sealed and secure from rodents and insects that may be attracted to the organic material.
- c) **Container Selection:** Use containers with tight-fitting lids to store the pellets. This will protect them from moisture and pests.
- d) **Proper Labeling:** Clearly label the storage containers with the contents and the date of purchase or opening. This helps manage inventory and ensures that older stock is used first.
- e) **Avoid Contamination:** Store alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets away from chemicals or other substances that could contaminate them, maintaining the organic integrity of the fertilizer.
- f) **Temperature Conditions:** Avoid storing pellets in locations with high-temperature fluctuations, as this can affect their efficacy and might cause condensation inside the storage container.
- g) **Direct Sunlight:** Keep the pellets out of direct sunlight, as UV rays can degrade the nutrients over time.
- h) **Ventilation:** If stored in large quantities, ensure the storage area is well-ventilated to prevent the buildup of any natural gases or odours that may emanate from the pellets as they slowly break down.



### 13. Impact on Soil Health:

Using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets in grapevine cultivation can have several long-term impacts on soil health, which are generally positive. Here are the considerations:

- a) **Soil Fertility:** Organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets gradually release nitrogen and other nutrients into the soil, enhancing soil fertility. This slow release ensures that nutrients are available for the grapevine plants when needed without the risk of leaching away as quickly as synthetic fertilizers might.
- b) **Soil Structure:** The organic matter from alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets contributes to the soil's organic content, improving soil structure. Good soil structure enhances aeration, water infiltration, and retention, all of which benefit the root health of grapevine plants.
- c) **Microbial Activity:** The introduction of organic matter from alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets supports a diverse microbial ecosystem in the soil. These microbes help break down organic matter into nutrients that plants can absorb, and they play a role in suppressing soil-borne diseases.
- d) **Sustainability:** Alfalfa-based pellets are a renewable, plant-based resource. Their use helps reduce the dependency on chemical fertilizers, which can be derived from non-renewable sources and have a higher environmental impact.
- e) **Reduced Soil Erosion:** Healthy soil with good structure is less prone to erosion. The organic matter in alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can help bind soil particles together, making the soil more stable and resistant to erosion from wind and water.
- f) **pH Balance:** Organic fertilizers like alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can help maintain a balanced soil pH when used correctly. However, overuse could potentially impact soil pH, so monitoring and adjusting pH as needed is essential.
- g) **Nutrient Runoff:** Unlike synthetic fertilizers, which can contribute to nutrient runoff and water pollution, organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are less likely to cause these issues due to their slow-release nature.



- h) **Soil Life:** Using organic fertilizers like alfalfa-based pellets can enhance the abundance and diversity of soil life, not just microbes but also earthworms and beneficial insects, which contribute to the breakdown of organic matter and nutrient cycling.
- i) **Residue Buildup:** Organic fertilizers typically don't leave behind harmful residues that can accumulate in the soil over time. On the other hand, synthetic fertilizers can lead to a buildup of salts and chemicals that may harm soil health and plant growth.
- j) **Plant Health and Yield:** Healthy soil produces healthy plants. Long-term use of organic alfalfa-based fertilizer can lead to sustained plant health and potentially improved yields due to improved soil conditions.
- k) **Organic Certification:** For grapevine growers seeking organic certification, using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets aligns with the requirements for organic farming, which can be an essential factor for marketability and premium pricing.

#### **14. Environmental Impact:**

Using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets for grapevine cultivation comes with several environmental considerations. Here's a breakdown of the potential impacts:

- a) **Reduced Chemical Use:** Organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are an organic fertilizer option that reduces the need for synthetic, chemical fertilizers. This benefits the environment by minimizing soil and water pollution from chemical runoff, which can harm aquatic ecosystems and degrade soil quality over time.
- b) **Carbon Footprint:** The production and transport of synthetic fertilizers are energy-intensive processes that contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets typically have a lower carbon footprint, mainly if sourced locally, because alfalfa-based fertilizer is a plant-based product that can be grown and processed with less energy.
- c) **Biodiversity:** By improving soil health and reducing chemical use, organic fertilizers like alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can help maintain or even increase biodiversity in the cultivation area. Healthier soils support a more comprehensive range of soil organisms, supporting a more diverse ecosystem above ground.



- d) Sustainable Farming Practices: Alfalfa is often part of crop rotation schemes that can prevent soil depletion and reduce pest outbreaks. This sustainable farming practice supports soil conservation and reduces the need for chemical pest control.
- e) Water Conservation: Healthy soils with good structure can retain water more effectively, reducing the need for frequent irrigation and conserving water resources. This is particularly important in regions where water scarcity is a concern.
- f) Nitrogen Fixation: Alfalfa is a legume, which means it can fix atmospheric nitrogen through its root nodules in symbiosis with bacteria. This process reduces the need for nitrogen fertilizers, and when alfalfa is used as a fertilizer, it continues this beneficial contribution to soil nitrogen levels.
- g) Reduced Eutrophication Risk: Synthetic fertilizers significantly contribute to eutrophication in water bodies, where excess nutrients lead to algal blooms and dead zones. Organic pellets release nutrients more slowly, which reduces the risk of runoff and eutrophication.
- h) Soil Erosion: The organic matter in alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can help bind soil, reducing erosion by wind and water. This helps to maintain soil health and prevents the loss of fertile topsoil.
- i) Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Although organic fertilizers can contribute to greenhouse gas emissions by releasing nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas, they are generally considered to release less than synthetic fertilizers.
- j) Chemical Resistance: Overreliance on synthetic fertilizers can lead to chemical resistance in pests and diseases, leading to more vital chemicals in larger quantities. Organic fertilizers like alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets can help break this cycle.
- k) Renewable Resource: Organic Alfalfa used in producing alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets is a readily renewable resource. The plants are grown without the use of chemicals or fertilizers. Throughout its 5-7 year lifespan, the alfalfa grown in the fields replenishes the soils, improves biodiversity and is an excellent carbon sink.



## 15. Expected Results:

Using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets in grapevine cultivation should lead to several expected results, and knowing how to troubleshoot common issues can help you maximize their benefits. Here are the considerations:

- a) **Improved Soil Health:** Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets should enhance soil structure, aeration, and microbial activity, leading to healthier soil and plants.
- b) **Steady Growth:** Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets release nutrients slowly, supporting the continued growth of the grapevine plants throughout the vegetative stage.
- c) **Enhanced Vegetative Growth:** Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are expected to promote robust vegetative growth with lush green foliage due to their high nitrogen content.
- d) **Increased Yield:** Healthier plants with better soil conditions often lead to an increased yield of grapevine flowers, assuming other growth factors such as light and water are optimized.
- e) **Sustainable Practices:** Using organic fertilizers like alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets contributes to sustainable farming practices, which is an expected benefit for the environment and can be a selling point for consumers.

## 16. Troubleshooting:

- a) **Slow Growth:** If plants show slow growth, it may indicate a deficiency. First, check other factors such as water, light, and pH levels. If these are optimal, consider a soil test to check nutrient levels and adjust the application rate of pellets as needed.
- b) **Pest Attraction:** If alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets attract pests, ensure that pellets are well-incorporated into the soil and not left on the surface. Also, maintain a balanced ecosystem with beneficial insects and consider organic pest control measures.
- c) **Mould:** If mould or fungus appears on the soil surface, it could be due to high humidity and over-application of pellets. The mould is a sign of increased microbial activity and should not be a concern. Lightly turn or mix the top layer into the soil. Also, ensure the pellets are stored in a dry, cool place to prevent mould growth.



## 17. Quality control and assurance:

EcoCert in Canada is a certification body that ensures products meet nationally recognized organic standards set forth by Canadian Organic Standards (COS). A product like alfalfa-based organic fertilizer must adhere to specific regulations to be certified by EcoCert. Here's a general overview of the process:

- a) **Compliance with Standards:** The product must comply with the Canadian Organic Standards, which cover everything from sourcing ingredients to manufacturing processes. This means alfalfa-based fertilizers must be grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers.
- b) **Application and Documentation:** The producer or manufacturer of the alfalfa-based fertilizer must apply for certification with EcoCert and provide detailed documentation about their product. This includes descriptions of the production process, sourcing of materials, and handling procedures.
- c) **Initial Assessment:** EcoCert reviews the application and documentation to ensure initial compliance with organic standards. If the paperwork is in order, an on-site audit is scheduled.
- d) **On-Site Audit:** An EcoCert auditor visits the production facilities to inspect the operations and verify that the practices align with the standards. They may take samples for testing, review records, and evaluate the traceability of the ingredients.
- e) **Certification Decision:** EcoCert will make a certification decision after a successful audit. If there are non-compliances, the producer must address these before certification can be granted.
- f) **Continuous Compliance:** Once certified, the producer must maintain compliance with the organic standards. EcoCert requires regular documentation updates and conducts annual audits to ensure ongoing adherence.
- g) **Use of EcoCert Logo:** Certified products can carry the EcoCert logo, which assures consumers that the product meets strict organic standards. This logo is a marketing asset, communicating the product's organic integrity to potential customers.



- h) Market Access: Certification allows producers to market their products as organic within Canada and often in international markets that recognize EcoCert or have reciprocity agreements with Canadian organic standards.

Obtaining EcoCert certification for products like alfalfa-based organic fertilizer can be a rigorous process for producers and manufacturers. Still, it's essential for accessing organic markets and appealing to consumers who prefer organic products. It's recommended to contact EcoCert directly or visit their website for the most current and detailed guidelines specific to certifying organic fertilizers in Canada.

### **18. Certification processes:**

Bodies like ECOCERT ensure that organic certifications meet global benchmarks, ensuring they meet the standards for organic farming. These standards encompass:

- a) Protection of the climate and environment.
- b) Conservation of soil fertility.
- c) Preservation of biodiversity.
- d) Respect for natural cycles and animal welfare.
- e) No chemical, synthetic products, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are used.
- f) Transparent labelling for consumers.

### **19. Possible Misconceptions:**

- a) "Instant Results" Misconception: Some may expect alfalfa-based pellets to work as quickly as synthetic fertilizers. However, as an organic option, they release nutrients slowly over time.
- b) "Works for Every Plant" Misconception: While alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets benefit many plants, they might not be suitable for every type of plant. Some plants may require different nutrient balances not provided by alfalfa.



- c) "Only Good for Nitrogen" Misconception: Alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets are known for their nitrogen content, but they also provide macro-nutrients phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and sulphur, plus an additional 30 other nutrients, minerals, and amino acids.
- d) "No Need for Soil Testing" Misconception: Even with organic fertilizers, soil testing is crucial to understanding nutrient needs and avoiding over-application or imbalances.

## **20. Regulations and Standards:**

In Canada, the regulations and standards for using organic alfalfa-based fertilizer pellets, particularly in grape vine cultivation, are governed by a few critical regulatory bodies and sets of rules:

- a) The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) mandates that all fertilizers and supplements, including organic alfalfa-based fertilizers, adhere to the amended Fertilizers Regulations. These regulations dictate that products must be appropriately managed to ensure safety and reduce the potential for chemical and microbial contamination.
- b) The Fertilizers Act and Fertilizers Regulations outline the definitions and requirements for fertilizers and supplements. For a product to be used in grape vine cultivation, it must comply with these regulations, which include standards for content, composition, and contaminant levels. Some fertilizers and supplements require registration and a pre-market assessment by the CFIA before being sold in Canada.
- c) Trade Memorandum T-4-93 sets specific safety standards regarding the product's content, composition, contaminant levels, and upper tolerances for micronutrient levels guaranteed on the label.
- d) Labelling Requirements under the Fertilizers Act are described in Trade Memorandum T-4-130, ensuring transparency and adequate information for users.
- e) The Pest Control Products Act also comes into play if the product contains a pesticide component. Such products must comply with this act and its regulations to be registered under the Fertilizers Act.





For the specific application of grapevine, additional requirements may be applicable under the Grape Vine Regulations, administered by Health Canada's Controlled Substances and Grape Vine Branch.

Producers must ensure that their organic alfalfa-based fertilizers comply with these regulations to maintain product safety, efficacy, and legality. Regular updates and consultations with these regulatory bodies can provide guidance and updates on compliance.

## **21. Conclusion:**

Alfalfa-based organic fertilizer pellets emerge as a pivotal solution for grapevine growers seeking sustainable cultivation. This paper has illuminated their historical usage, defined their organic nature, and expounded on the benefits ranging from improved soil health and enhanced plant growth to promoting biodiversity and reducing environmental impact. Adhering to Canadian regulations, these fertilizers align with organic certification standards and address the industry's growing eco-conscious trend. With proper application and adherence to guidelines, grapevine cultivators can leverage these pellets to achieve robust growth while nurturing the ecosystem.

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- For details on the regulations and standards in Canada for using organic fertilizers in grape vine cultivation, I provided information from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) website.



If you require further details or have additional questions, please ask!

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