



All Natural Land
Care Supplies

PRIVATE LABEL PROGRAM

North Country Organics (NCO) offers a private labeling option to wholesale customers who need absolute exclusivity. Private label products eliminate the possibility of customers—who frequently attempt to *buy direct*—from cutting you and your profit out of the picture. It can also prevent your competition from learning your trade secrets. Private labeling can be done with established NCO fertilizer blends or custom blends made for a particular market niche. There are a couple of downsides to private labeling that should be considered. First, a new, private labeled product has no name recognition but if your company already has name recognition, this may not be an issue. Also, the responsibility for registering private labeled products in each state where they will be sold would fall on the label owner's shoulders. If the end user is purchasing the product and it will not be resold, registration may not be necessary. Registration is not a daunting task and we can assist with the process.

Packaging - Packaging is a key consideration. Package type and size needs to be determined based upon the target market and on the type and density of the product. Bags, boxes, bottles, or buckets can be pre-printed or labeled. Printing (labels or containers) is always less expensive (on a per unit basis) as print quantity increases. Projecting how many to print, however, may be difficult task and it may be prudent to consider plain packaging with simple, one-color labels, until market patterns become apparent. Unfortunately, generic packaging may not receive the desired amount of attention. Fertilizer labeling must meet specific requirements as outlined by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO). We can assist with labeling requirements.

Attached Labels - Labels may be more expensive than printed containers depending on the design, the number of different colors, the number of labels printed, and the cost of applying them to the package. Labels can be as basic as a generic computer generated label, a sewn-on tag, or it can be dazzling with lacquer finished four color processing on clay coated paper. Processed color labels can be very expensive, however, and printing large quantities is often required to dilute the set up and material costs. If quantity projections are impractical, generic labeling may be warranted. Fertilizer labels must meet specific requirements as outlined by the Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO). We can assist with labeling requirements.

OMRI - The Organic Materials Research Institute (OMRI) is a non-profit organization that scrutinizes agricultural products and determines if they are appropriate for use on certified organic farms. Products that don't have the OMRI listing symbol are widely recognized as environmentally benign and ecologically compatible whether they are for use on certified organic farms or not. Applying for OMRI listing is not inexpensive but relatively easy if the ingredients in a private labeled product are the same and come from the same source as those used in an OMRI listed product. OMRI listing for a product that contains not-yet OMRI listed ingredients is relatively difficult. NCO currently has ten products that are OMRI listed and we can assist with the OMRI application.

Blends - Most of the NCO standard products are available for private labeling but we also offer the option of custom blending for those who prefer their own combinations of natural ingredients or need a product for a specific use. Sometimes, specific ratios of nutrients are required to correct a common imbalance in regional soils. We are happy to formulate for your specific needs.

Timing - Private labeling takes more time and planning than ordering products with the NCO brand. We can only build and store private label inventory for short periods of time. If bags or labels are to be printed, an average of 12 weeks lead-time is needed for printing, product assembly, and shipping. During the busiest part of the season, that average is inadequate. Customers who resell large quantities of private labeled products often place their orders several months in advance.

Minimum Orders - Our fertilizer blender mixes five-ton batches. We cannot mix less than a ton of anything in this machinery and once a custom blend is made, the order cannot be cancelled. In most cases, your custom blend is only valuable to you and we would not be able to resell it to anyone else. Minimums for products that do not require our mixing equipment may be less than a ton. More often, minimum orders are dictated by the economics of bag or label costs than by the equipment limitations. A ton of fertilizer in 50-pound bags would require only 40 bags or labels, which may not be economical to print. The following table shows typical print quantities for reasonable pricing:

Type	Quantity
Computer label	<10
Sew-on tag	1,000+
Printed label (one color)	2,000+
Printed label (multicolor)	5000+
Printed label (processed color)	10,000+
Printed bag	20,000+

Quotes - Quotes are based upon the raw materials needed, the size of the order, and upon assembly costs. NCO can arrange trucking of your order as a convenience but customers are free to arrange their own freight.

Credit and Payment Terms - New customers who do not have established terms with NCO must make payment in full before the private label order is manufactured. If customers have established credit terms with NCO, the order can be placed (up to the customer's credit limit) with a signed purchased order. Once any part of the order has been manufactured, the order cannot be cancelled.

Private labeling is not for everyone but may be just the ticket for landscapers and turf care experts who want to keep their competition guessing, distributors who want their own brand, or manufacturers who would like to branch out into the natural fertilizer market but are not prepared to invest in the equipment necessary for assembling their own product.

REV 10/04