



NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides
Grupo de Trabajo Técnico del TLC sobre Plaguicidas
Groupe de travail technique de l'ALENA sur les pesticides

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We are pleased to present *The North American Initiative: The Next Five Years* and the companion workplan document for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Technical Working Group on Pesticides (TWG). The United States, Mexico, and Canada have been working together over the past decade to promote pesticide harmonization efforts in the region in fulfillment of the TWG mandate. The TWG was established to address pesticide issues arising in the context of liberalized trade while recognizing the environmental and human health objectives of the NAFTA. The TWG has also served as an important model for other international harmonization efforts, such as the pesticides initiatives under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Some of our noteworthy accomplishments include: harmonized data requirements; greater access to pest control tools for minor use crops; increased availability of lower risk pesticides; promotion of integrated pest management programs for crops of shared interest; establishment of worker safety training programs; and, many other projects giving shape to a North American market for pesticides.

The new Five-Year Strategy was prepared after thoughtful consideration of the input we received from stakeholders over the last year. The Five-Year Strategy reaffirms the overarching goals articulated in the first North American Initiative, issued by the TWG in 1997. Building upon these goals, the new Five-Year Strategy defines three objectives and four work areas to guide the TWG's efforts through 2008. In response to public comments, the TWG developed a companion Workplan that provides detailed information on over 30 projects designed to advance the long-term goals and objectives of the five-year strategy.

Much progress has been made by the TWG since its inception, yet much more remains to be done in facilitating cost effective pesticide regulation and trade among the three countries. The NAFTA governments cannot accomplish the overarching goals of this strategy without the active participation and support of our stakeholders. We look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts, both among the three NAFTA governments and between the governments and our stakeholders, to realize the full potential of the TWG as a mechanism for advancing pesticide harmonization and work sharing efforts, while maintaining the highest level of protection of public health and the environment in North America.

Sincerely,

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