

**NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides (TWG)
Summary of Executive Board Meeting - June 3-4, 2004**

The NAFTA TWG Executive Board met in Mexico City, from June 3- 4, 2004.

Dr. Miguel Lombera, the Mexican co-chair, welcomed the Canadian and US delegations. He described the regulatory organization for pesticides in Mexico, and advised that SENASICA and COFEPRIS will share the role of Mexican co-chair of the Executive Board. The Executive Board agreed to Dr. Lombera's proposal that the mid-year Executive Board meeting alternate locations, as is the case for the NAFTA Stakeholder meeting and associated Executive Board meeting. The Secretariat will propose an approach for implementation.

Wendy Sexsmith described the current status of the Canadian proposal to revoke the 0.1 General Maximum Residue Limit. The extensive comments that were received during the consultation on the proposal are being analyzed, and the proposal is being reviewed in light of these comments. Once Canada's plans are developed, they will be shared with NAFTA colleagues as early and as fully as possible.

Jim Jones briefly outlined the key aspects of the US Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA), which will provide additional resources to the US EPA to assist in meeting registration goals and re-registration commitments, as well as providing set-aside funds to support worker safety and the approval of the new inerts.

The Secretariat provided a report on the recent call with stakeholders, which provided an opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the Executive Board agenda.

The Executive Board discussed a number of joint review items, including: a proposed trilateral joint review of a conventional pesticide with a new formulation; piloting of refinements to the Joint Review process through the next joint review of a new active ingredient; and, revising the Joint Review process to take into consideration recent changes to the US pesticide registration process resulting from PRIA. It was agreed that the United States and Canada will examine, through the Regulatory Capacity Building Subcommittee, how both countries carry out worker exposure assessment, and how any differences can be addressed. Executive Board members agreed to encourage joint reviews. Progress was reported on the preparation of a document to outline the Joint Review process to assist with internal coordination of joint reviews, and to address communications with stakeholders. Progress on a joint Canada-Mexico efficacy review was reported; Mexico is translating the templates for efficacy review and will use these templates for their review.

With respect to re-evaluation and re-registration, the significant progress in this area was outlined, and ways will be sought to make this a three country process.

The status of the four minor Use Joint Reviews were discussed, and actions to institutionalize simultaneous development and submission of minor use joint reviews and ensure Mexican participation will be identified before the next Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board

also recognized the importance of ensuring that the databases in the reviewing countries for active ingredients are adequate to allow for the registration of minor uses. Three specific chemical combinations of interest to Mexico were identified. Mexico was encouraged to continue to identify such specific priorities. The collaborative work on US crop groupings was reported, and all countries will identify crops to be added to crop groups. The need to examine efficacy and exposure with respect to crop groupings in the future was recognized.

Progress with respect to NAFTA Labels was discussed by the Executive Board. The importance of ensuring that all are aware of the variety and meaning of terminology in this area was recognized (for example, antimicrobials and biocides). The TWG will continue to pursue NAFTA labels for non-agricultural products, including the interest of a joint review applicant to pursue a NAFTA label. With respect to this review, labelling issues will be identified early, well before the end of the review process, and senior management will be involved to help ensure success. Mexico will be involved in the labelling review to develop capacity. The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling (GHS) initiative has the potential to resolve a number of NAFTA label issues. Each country provided a progress report on GHS implementation, and NAFTA partners will continue to collaborate and exchange information.

The TWG discussed the importance of harmonizing data requirements for anti-microbial products and agreed to explore such opportunities, particularly in the context of proposed U.S. rule-making under 40 CFR Part 158W. Interest has been expressed by the Non-Agricultural Working Group regarding Joint Reviews for pesticides for new uses (second entry products). The TWG will communicate to the NAWG in writing our willingness to develop a Joint Review process for new uses, and the need to identify a registrant with a specific new use that they wish to register trilaterally in the NAFTA countries as a pilot, to assist in developing the process.

Mexico identified four areas in which Canadian and US assistance is sought in capacity building: dietary risk assessment (particularly for acute and long term exposure), establishment of tolerances, pesticide GMOs, and re-evaluation/re-registration. In addition, Mexico is interested in the EPA data on Latin Diet in the United States. Mechanisms could include visits to the United States and Canada, courses in Mexico by Canadian and US personnel, advisors in the EPA and PMRA and information sharing in general. Canada and the United States saw many possibilities using existing resources to provide assistance as discussed. On the GMO item, internal discussions would be necessary in the respective countries. Mexico will forward to the United States and Canada a more detailed description of these four capacity building areas, including their relative priority for Mexico. The three countries will then develop a proposed work plan to collaborate in addressing these needs.

Progress on the Pulse Project was described, including priorities from the Pulse growers for possible NAFTA labels for existing products. Mexico noted that they are not involved to any extent in pulse exports. With respect to the tomato project, the Risk Reduction and Food Residues Subcommittees will send a letter to tomato growers summarizing TWG efforts to date and requesting an expression of interest in pursuing this project. There was agreement among Executive Board members that NAFTA partners may do the analysis required to support the selection of another commodity.

With respect to Food Residue Projects, progress on the project regarding a harmonized approach to setting maximum residue limits (MRLs) through a statistically-based methodology was described. There was strong support for the accomplishments to date in this area and interest in continued progress. The Codex representatives from Mexico, the United States and Canada will introduce this work to the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) and FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR). The proposal from U.S. IR-4 and Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) for further reduction in the total number of field residue trials required for NAFTA studies was accepted as a project by the Executive Board, and the proposed next steps were approved. The TWG will seek an opportunity for further discussion with the Industry Working Group (IWG) on the IR 4/AAFC proposal and relationship of that proposal to the IWG Regional Zone Map proposal. The proposed project regarding a systematization of data waivers was considered. The Food Residue Subcommittee and the Secretariat will draft a letter to the project sponsors, the TWG will advise them of the decision and ensure that they are aware of the process for data waivers in each country. With respect to sub-zone issues, Canada will be undertaking research to address the 1/1a and 5/5b zones and the US agreed to look at 5/5a issues. Mexico noted that, in order to adopt the NAFTA zone maps, their regulatory framework would have to be modified. Mexico is working toward harmonization with Chapter 9 of the Canadian Residue Chemistry Guidelines.

With respect to trade irritant resolution, the Executive Board approved the revised project sheet. The Executive encouraged exploration of further opportunities to address MRL harmonization through re-evaluation/re-registration. In this regard, the Joint Review and Food Residue Subcommittees will identify several chemicals under re-evaluation/re-registration to determine whether differing MRLs can be harmonized. Based on their experience, the subcommittees will collaborate on revisions to the trade irritant project sheet, and bring the results of this effort and the revised project sheet forward to the next Executive Board meeting. The U.S. and Canada requested that Mexico raise any specific trade irritant issues for resolution through on-going work.

Progress on the NAFTA Import Tolerance Guidance Document, including results of stakeholder consultations, was reported. Each country will identify their policy and process considerations with respect to this document, along with the time required to address these considerations to establish the time that will be required before the document can be approved.

The status of risk reduction projects were reported. The United States and Canada agreed to provide information about applicator certification and training to Mexico. The United States also agreed to share information on worker safety initiatives supported by the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act. The United States and Mexico will convene a conference call on the Train the Trainers program and its link to TWG. Canada, United States and Mexico will convene a conference call with respective experts on pesticide disposal to exchange information and discuss future collaborative activities.

With respect to the status of Regulatory Capacity Building projects, members will ensure that regulatory scientists in OECD countries are aware of and have the opportunity to participate in the finalization of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Maximum Tolerated Dose

(MTD) and Developmental Neurotoxicity (DNT) papers. The Regulatory Capacity Building Subcommittee will develop a short document on use of electronic templates. Canada invited the United States and Mexico to a government IT Workshop on Electronic Submissions in Canada in September, 2004. Mexico noted that, being an OECD country, it will eventually have to adopt the same format.

The United States noted its interest in working with Canada in the future, once the Canadian system of adverse effects reporting has been implemented, to identify possible opportunities for further harmonization.

As a follow-up to the stakeholder conference call, the Secretariat will draft a letter advising the stakeholders of the process for submission of projects for consideration by the Executive Board.

Stakeholder conference calls are an effective public outreach tool and should continue. Further efforts are encouraged in reaching out to a broader constituency. A conference call will be organized shortly after this meeting to brief the stakeholders on the outcome of the meeting. Concern was expressed that a unilingual conference call may exclude some of our stakeholders from Mexico. Options were discussed briefly.

With respect to performance measures, the Executive Board noted that such measures must be simple and understandable to our stakeholders and should encompass the broad range of activities undertaken by NAFTA TWG. We should focus on successes large and small including MRL harmonization, training, scientific advances, templates, re-evaluation and worker issues. Trade, safety, communications and sustainability were noted as priority areas in the five year plan and should have appropriate indicators. The Secretariat will work with Subcommittee co-chairs to develop performance indicators, and will ensure that this item is routinely on the Executive Board agenda.

The next Executive Board meeting will take place December 1 -3, 2004 in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. The stakeholder meeting will be held on December 2.