

PROJECT COMPLETION SHEET

SUBCOMMITTEE: Food Residue

PROJECT TITLE: **NAFTA Guidance for the Establishment of Pesticide Tolerances/MRLs for Imported Commodities**

PROJECT ID: FR02-97-1105

LEAD COUNTRY: United States

PROJECT TEAM: United States: Robert McNally
Canada: Ariff Ally
Mexico: Amada Vélez

PROJECT DATES: April 1997 – December 2005

GOAL: NAFTA Guidance for Establishment of Tolerances/MRLs for Imported Commodities

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this project is to develop common NAFTA import tolerance guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs in NAFTA countries. This includes guidance on data requirements as well as guidance on non-science policy and procedures, taking into account regulatory requirements, safety concerns and views of each country. As a starting point for development of a NAFTA approach, the Food Residue Subcommittee proposed using two documents under development in the United States. The first was the April 4, 1997, document *Guidance on Import Tolerances* outlining proposed data requirements, presented to the Science Advisory Panel (SAP) in June 1997. The second was a companion document on policy that was being drafted at that time. The initial project was endorsed by the Technical Working Group on Pesticides (TWG) in June 1997.

Since then, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed interim guidance for import tolerances, taking into account inputs received from stakeholders and NAFTA partners. The effective result is that the original NAFTA effort has evolved into a two-stage process.

The first stage has been the development of interim guidance in the United States. The second stage is to develop a NAFTA approach to setting import MRLs/tolerances based on the EPA's guidance. It is expected that any stakeholder feedback from implementation of the American interim guidance will be beneficial to the development of the NAFTA document.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

When food commodities are imported into North America or among NAFTA countries, they may contain pesticide residues for which there are no existing maximum residue limits (MRLs) or tolerances in one or more NAFTA countries or the MRLs/tolerances may not be compatible. MRLs/tolerances of individual NAFTA countries may also differ from those in other countries or established under the Codex Alimentarius. To promote trade among NAFTA countries as well as between North America and the rest of the world, it is highly desirable that a common NAFTA approach to establishing import MRLs/tolerances be developed.

A NAFTA approach to setting import tolerances would benefit consumers, industry and growers as well as facilitate joint or shared reviews among governments. It would provide for continued consumer protection, promote fair trading practices and contribute to international obligations. A common approach would also facilitate coordinated input to proposed discussions with other member countries from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on this issue through the OECD Pesticide Forum.

WORK PLAN

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UPDATE: Fall 2005

GOAL	ACTIVITY	TIME-FRAME
Executive Board Guidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review American interim import tolerance guidance document 2. Agree to consider as basis for developing NAFTA approach 	January 21, 1999 Complete
Guidance for American import tolerance policy (Completion of Phase I)	Publication of American interim import tolerance policy in the Federal Register	June 2000
NAFTA guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs for imported commodities (Initiation of Phase II)	Draft NAFTA import tolerance guidance for Co-chair consideration	April 30, 2000
	Report on progress to NAFTA TWG and refine/confirm work plan	June 2000
	Draft 2 NAFTA import tolerance guidance for stakeholder inputs	September 2000
	Draft 3 NAFTA import tolerance guidance based on Co-chair and stakeholder inputs. Distribute for additional comments.	November 2000
	Progress Report to Executive Board	December 2000
The EPA tabled a draft document for input by Mexico and Canada. This draft document is a modification of the American domestic import tolerance document. Work ongoing.	Draft 4 (final) based on stakeholder comments	March 2001
	TWG endorsement of draft	November 2001
	Progress report to Executive Board on state of draft document	May 2002
	United States/Canada/Mexico aim to have final draft available for full NAFTA TWG meeting	December 2002

GOAL	ACTIVITY	TIME-FRAME
Proposed NAFTA guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs for imported commodities	Report to Executive Board on comments received from the April 2003 request for public comments in Canada and the United States.	July 2003
Proposed NAFTA guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs for imported commodities	Report on outcome of discussion at Food Residue Subcommittee Level of public comments received to Executive Board	December 2003
Subcommittee Co-chair Revision of the proposed NAFTA guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs for imported commodities	NAFTA partners indicate that they require additional time for consideration of revised guidance document.	June 2004
Revised NAFTA guidance for the establishment of pesticide tolerances/MRLs for imported commodities	For consideration by the NAFTA TWG Executive Board	December 2004
Reach agreement between the United States and Canada on how to move toward finalization of the document	Several teleconferences were held between the United States and Canada to discuss revisions and plans to move forward; the two countries decided to replace the data requirements list in the document with references and links to each country's respective list of requirements	Summer/Fall 2005
Prepare final draft to share with Canada	Include all revisions suggested by Canada and correct data requirement issue	Fall 2005 December 2005 - Completed