

PROJECT SHEET

SUBCOMMITTEE: Food Residue and Risk Reduction

PROJECT TITLE: **Commodity / Pest-based Strategy for Addressing Trade Irritants and Risk Reduction for Tomatoes**

PROJECT ID: FR07-03-1005

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INITIATION: November 2003

GOAL: To develop and implement a North American strategy to address trade/barriers and achieve risk reduction for tomatoes (fresh and processed; field and greenhouse).

UPDATE: May 2006

Tomato grower organizations from Canada, Mexico and the United States identified three priority active ingredients as potential trade barriers, and the list was submitted to the governments. All three priorities were selected to move through the harmonization process. A “Work Plan” was developed to identify key harmonization issues, and approaches/options for resolution for each active ingredient were identified as a priority. An “Action Plan” was created to identify and track specific strategies and actions towards harmonization. Bi-weekly Canada–United States–Mexico harmonization teleconferences to discuss actions, activities and track progress towards completion of these priorities are ongoing. Consultations with tomato grower organizations were made as necessary regarding approaches/options for resolving discrepancies. Periodic updates have been provided to tomato stakeholders. In some instances, harmonization options are expected to achieve risk reduction through identification of available potential alternative pest control tools. Harmonization to alleviate a potential trade barrier has already been achieved for one active ingredient in two of the three countries.

The grower organizations have requested an opportunity to identify and submit their next set of identified priorities. Next steps are to complete the initial priorities and move forward to work through those additional priorities once they are received, in the same manner as identified above.

GOAL:

Develop and implement a North American strategy to address trade irritants/barriers and achieve risk reduction for tomatoes (fresh and processed; field and greenhouse).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Stakeholder agreement was sought to develop recommendations and priorities for harmonizing pest control tools for tomato use. The tomato grower and processor associations from United States, Mexico and Canada developed priorities for action. This work is being considered within the tomato trade irritant/barrier and risk reduction project.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Addressing trade irritants/barriers through risk reduction strategies provides the potential to increase trade of tomato crops, while improving public health and the environment. A more sustainable tomato production system can be achieved through reduction in crop losses due to pest infestation, management of resistant weed populations, reduction in the amount of and reliance on pesticides and transition to “reduced risk” pesticides, where these tools are needed. There is significant potential to contribute to worldwide availability of these crops and sustainable development by reducing overall pesticide use, with benefit to the producer, consumers, including children (as tomato products are an important part of most North American children’s diets), and to the environment through this project. Also, by working collaboratively in a NAFTA framework, there is a potential to coordinate methyl bromide alternative registrations and thus facilitate a smooth transition away from the use of methyl bromide for tomato production in North America.

Development of this strategy by the NAFTA Technical Working Group (TWG), in partnership with growers, the pesticide industry and other stakeholder groups, will lead to an implementable strategy and provide a common and sustainable approach to addressing trade irritants/barriers and reducing risks while managing pests. It is expected that, due to the short-term nature of addressing these identified trade irritants/barriers and the risk reduction process, trade issues and residue limits will constitute a substantial part at the beginning of the initiative. Progressively, long-term trade resolutions, regulatory harmonization and integrated pest management solutions will be considered to assure/maintain the sustainability and North American trade level of the tomato industry. In addition, this strategy will provide a common context for regulatory decisions and provide a coordinated North American input to relevant international activities, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Pesticides Forum initiatives on risk reduction.

WORK PLAN

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GOAL	ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME
Establish general goals for a Commodity/Pest-Based Strategy for Addressing Trade Irritants and Risk Reduction for Tomato Crops.	Prepare a NAFTA/TWG project sheet.	November 2003
Solicit additional input from stakeholders regarding trade irritant and risk reduction priorities.	Meetings in each NAFTA country between governments and tomato grower and processor organizations.	January–March 2004
Reaffirm stakeholders interest in the initiative	NAFTA TWG letters sent to tomato growers to reaffirm stakeholders interest; provide Canadian tomato growers with tolerance/MRL and registered product listings.	October 6, 2004
Identify top priorities for trade irritant resolution.	Grower organizations provide to governments their top trade irritant priorities.	April 2005
Develop a strategy and schedule for resolution of top three trade irritant and risk reduction priorities identified/submitted.	Strategies should be developed in the context of risk reduction (e.g., viable alternatives will be sought for high-risk products).	May 2005
Identify additional priorities for trade irritant resolution.	Grower organizations in each country provide additional trade priorities to governments. Governments to review additional priorities.	To be determined
Develop a strategy and schedule for resolution of the agreed upon additional trade irritants and risk reduction priorities.	Strategies should be developed in the context of risk reduction (e.g., viable alternatives will be sought for high-risk products).	To be determined
Keep stakeholders involved/engaged to ensure their needs are met as priorities change and the project moves forward.	Meet annually with growers and other stakeholders to solicit input and determine progress.	Next meeting— December 2006