



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

Filename: FR0200FE

PROJECT SHEET

SUBCOMMITTEE: Food Residues

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

LEAD COUNTRY: United States

PROJECT TEAM: Robert McNally - USA
Ariff Ally - Canada
Amada Vélez - Mexico

INITIATION: April 30, 1997

UPDATE: November 19, 2003

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 both guidance on data requirements and 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 Residues Subcommittee proposed to utilize 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 which was being drafted at that time. The initial project was endorsed by the TWG in June 1997.

Since then the US 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 development of interim US guidance.

The second stage will be developing a NAFTA approach to setting import MRLs/tolerances using the US document as the basis. It is expected that any stakeholder feedback from implementation of US EPA interim guidance will be beneficial to the development of the NAFTA document.

MILESTONES:

April 1997	EPA shares data requirement piece of import tolerance guidance with Canada and Mexico. Initial NAFTA TWG Food Residues Subcommittee consultation on the draft US EPA import tolerance data requirements “ <i>Guidance on Import Tolerances</i> ”
June 1997	Presentation of draft EPA import tolerance guidance to the US EPA Science Advisory Panel. Two NAFTA projects on import tolerance requirements (scientific data requirements and regulatory policies) proposed to the TWG.
November 1997	EPA shares draft policy piece of import tolerance guidance with Canada and Mexico.
December 1997	Progress report on development of import tolerance guidance to TWG Executive Board. TWG Executive Board instructed the combining of the separate data requirement and policy projects into one document.
April 1998	Data requirements portion revised (March 1998) based on Canada’s comments and sent to NAFTA partners.
May-June 1998	Data requirement and policy pieces of import tolerance guidance revised and shared with Mexico and Canada. Stakeholders updated May 1998.
June 1998	Update on status of project presented at TWG meeting in Mexico City. Agreed to hold a July 1998 Food Residues Subcommittee Meeting in Washington to discuss remaining issues.
July 1998	Consultation/meeting of Food Residue Committee Co-chairs to discuss remaining unresolved issues.
December 1998	Status report on progress of US interim guidance to the January 21-22, 1999 meeting of the TWG Executive Committee.
March 1999	Food Residue Subcommittee Co-chairs informed that EPA interim guidance has been routed through channels for publication consideration. Agreement that the project has evolved into a two stage process, the first of which is publication of the EPA document. The second is using the EPA document as the basis for a NAFTA approach.
June 2000	EPA publishes US Interim Import Tolerance Guidelines
March 2001	EPA tabled a draft document for input by Mexico and Canada. This draft document is a modification of the US domestic import tolerance document. Work ongoing.
May 2002	Food Residue Subcommittee Co-chairs informed that some clarification of document was needed and would be presented at the next NAFTA full meeting.

Issues would be resolved in the summer of 2002 and document circulated prior to the full NAFTA meeting.

April 2003 EPA and PMRA seek comment on proposed NAFTA Import Tolerance Guidance

Fall 2003 Food Residue Subcommittee reviews comments and discusses issues with Stakeholders

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 MRLs/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. In order to promote trade among NAFTA countries and 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 both 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 OECD member countries on this issue through the OECD Pesticide Forum.

WORK PLAN

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GOAL	ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
Executive Board Guidance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Interim US Import Tolerance Guidance document 2. Agree to consider as basis for developing NAFTA approach 	Jan. 21, 1999 complete
Guidance for US Import Tolerance Policy (Completing Phase I)	Publication of interim US Import Tolerance Policy in the Federal Register	Tentatively by May 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
EPA tabled a draft document for input by Mexico and Canada. This draft document is a modification of the US 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	May 2002

GOAL	ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
	EPA aim to have final draft available for full NAFTA TWG meeting	December 2002
Propose NAFTA Import Tolerance Guidance	Report on comments received to Executive Board	July 2003
Executive Board Guidance	Report on outcome of discussion at technical/policy level on comments received	December 2003