



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

NAFTA Technical Working Group (TWG) Executives Board Meeting

May 2-3, 2005, Ottawa, CANADA

Dr. Karen Dodds (Canada) delivered welcoming remarks and reported on the development of regulations and implications of the new *Pest Control Products Act*. Amada Vélez (Mexico) reported on new Mexican regulations and on the status of reorganization. Jim Jones (United States) reported on current Office of Pesticide Program (OPP) issues including implementation of the *United States (U.S.) Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA)*.

The Secretariat provided a brief update on stakeholder communications. Two teleconferences have been held since Merida: January 27th for a Merida report out and April 11th for input to the Ottawa agenda.

The current workplan will be updated shortly and publicly released, with regular updates being issued twice yearly. The workplan format will be revised to better reflect links to the 5-year strategy goals.

A representative from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Secretariat presented on pesticides-related CEC activities, identifying potential areas for collaboration with the TWG, including the Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) and Children's Environmental Health initiatives. CEC and TWG Secretariat representatives will hold further discussions taking into consideration respective roles, responsibilities, and calendar of upcoming CEC and TWG events. Countries also provided an update on lindane activities and agreed to keep each other informed on domestic efforts.

The Joint Review Subcommittee gave a brief update on current and pending joint reviews, and stakeholder outreach efforts to encourage joint review submissions. The internal draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document will be revised to reflect a variety of new operating procedures and PRIA changes, and presented for Executive Board approval in December 2005. The SOP will also include a process to capture differences in risk assessment/risk management approaches, for further discussion and possible resolution as appropriate. A brief discussion on the possible development of a new Joint Review process involving a different approach toward work sharing was held, with further consultations to follow.

The Executive Board reaffirmed the TWG's willingness to develop a Joint Review process for new uses (as outlined in the June 2004 TWG meeting summary), yet noted that registrants have not submitted any pilot candidates for consideration by the NAFTA countries.

A brief overview was provided of NAFTA work sharing efforts to date for the re-evaluation and re-registration of pesticides, and the upcoming 15-year U.S. Registration Review and Canadian Re-evaluation Programs. The Executive Board agreed to carry out U.S./Canadian joint planning and

coordination efforts around scheduling and implementation, such that routine work sharing is an integral part of the registration review/re-evaluation processes. Relevant TWG leads will explore approaches for prioritizing reviews, assess levels of effort associated with addressing the different categories of reviews, and carry out some pilot projects for work sharing.

An update on NAFTA labels for non-agricultural products was given. U.S. and Canadian leads anticipate receiving pilot candidates from two registrants by June 2005, and completing the development of these NAFTA labels by the December TWG meeting. The status of GHS coordination and harmonization was discussed. The TWG will explore delivering a NAFTA report on GHS coordination at the upcoming OECD meeting in June 2005. The Executive Board received a status report on the Polymeric Betane pilot Joint Review and expressed support for continued efforts/next steps.

Updates on U.S. and Canadian efforts to reassess formulants or inert ingredients were provided, including U.S. timelines for reassessing the List 2 inert ingredients. Opportunities for further collaboration and harmonization were outlined for Executive Board consideration. The leads will continue to exchange information in this area.

A status report was given on the various commodity-based pilot projects being pursued to resolve trade irritants retrospectively. The Executive Board designated overall leads and agreed to allocate resources necessary to resolve Tier I and Tier II priorities for pulse crops and Tier I priorities for tomatoes, for which commodity-specific workplans will be established in May 2005. Discussions will continue on the priorities submitted by U.S. and Canadian potato growers. The results for Tier I pulse crop and tomato priorities and the status of other commodity efforts will be delivered at the December 2005 Executive Board meeting.

The Food Residue Subcommittee provided an update on the development of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to institutionalize the maximum residue level (MRL) statistical methodology, which was approved by the Executive Board in June 2004. The Executive Board agreed on next steps, including a public consultation process and implementation of the SOP by each country. The methodology is already operational in the U.S.

Canada provided an update on the development and implementation of the 0.1 parts per million (ppm) General MRL revocation policy, including administrative improvements in setting MRLs domestically. Leads will identify approaches to establishing new Canadian tolerances for those MRLs that have a corresponding U.S. tolerance level that is greater than 0.1 ppm, including the implications of these options. Consideration will be given to selecting a pilot chemical from the list of >0.1 ppm U.S. tolerance level MRLs and conducting a feasibility study of these approaches in conformance with environmental and human health standards, based on U.S. data evaluations and available resources.

The Executive Board formally approved the NAFTA residue trial efficiencies project sheet, outlining a process developed by Interregional Research Project 4 (IR-4) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to reduce the number of field trials by twenty-five percent (25%) using the NAFTA residue zone maps. The proposal had been adopted in concept by the Executive Board in June 2004.

A guidance document will be developed for use by registrants and IR-4 and presented for approval by the next TWG meeting. A related activity, an update was provided to the Executive Board regarding the update of national agricultural production figures in each NAFTA country and the adjustment of the number of field trials per zone, both domestically and within the NAFTA context. Leads will give consideration to global opportunities for greater residue trial efficiencies and report back to the Executive Board in December 2005.

Canada will evaluate a U.S. proposal to change the NAFTA zone map by putting both Wisconsin and Michigan in Zone 5, not Zone 5a, with a view toward having a response and an implementation plan by the end of May 2005.

The final import tolerance guidance document is in the final stages of revision, and is expected to be submitted to the Executive Board for approval shortly, followed by domestic publication and implementation in the U.S. and Canada.

Subsequent to stakeholder discussions held in Merida on proposed TWG performance indicators, the NAFTA countries will exchange information on national performance measures and propose development of TWG measures that take advantage of information already being collected and reported by the countries domestically. The Executive Board initiated a preliminary discussion on conducting an evaluation of the 5-Year Strategy (which concludes in 2008).

The U.S. IR-4 Program and AAFC provided an overview of collaborative efforts to date, including an update on the NAFTA joint residue studies and minor use Joint Review pilots. A draft standard operating procedure on minor use joint reviews is being tested through the pilot projects, with a final SOP expected for Executive Board approval in mid-2006.

The U.S. provided an update on efforts to develop new crop groupings, including implications for the TWG. The NAFTA countries will identify other global opportunities for advancing crop grouping efforts, as well as outlining domestic processes required to implement the crop groupings for discussion at the next TWG meeting.

Having accomplished several notable milestones and due to domestic staffing changes affecting membership, the Risk Reduction and Regulatory Capacity Building Subcommittees will embark on a scoping exercise and bring forward potential new work areas for Executive Board discussion in December 2005.

The Executive Board reviewed the current status of the U.S. and Canadian adverse effects reporting systems to explore opportunities for harmonization. The U.S. will convene an informational teleconference for interested NAFTA colleagues on the new proposed rule for conventional data requirements under 40 CFR 158.

A summary of key decisions reached by the Executive Board and resulting action items was delivered by the Secretariat. The U.S. commended the TWG for its accomplishments to date, and looks forward to discussing a robust agenda and reviewing several noteworthy deliverables at the next TWG meeting with stakeholders to be hosted by the U.S. in December 2005.