



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

NAFTA Technical Working Group on Pesticides
Ottawa, Ontario
November 13-15, 2013

MEETING SUMMARY

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Technical Working Group on Pesticides (TWG) met in Ottawa, Ontario, from November 13-15, 2013. The meeting was hosted by Dr. Richard Aucoin, Executive Director of Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). Government officials from the United States, Mexico and Canada attended, including Dr. Steven Bradbury, Director of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) and Dr. Hugo Fragoso Sánchez, of the Dirección General de Inocuidad Agroalimentaria, Acuícola y Pesquera (DGIAAP) from Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria¹ (SENASICA), Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación² (SAGARPA). Representatives from Mexico's Ministry of Health (COFEPRIS³) and Ministry of Environment (SEMARNAT⁴) also participated. The meeting was well attended by growers, registrants and other interested stakeholders from all three countries.

PLENARY

On November 14, Dr. Aucoin welcomed stakeholders and government participants from United States, Mexico and Canada to the meeting and looked forward to the ensuing discussions on key issues of interest to NAFTA stakeholders. In particular, he expressed great interest in two of the agenda items "The Way Forward" and "Pollinator Protection." He applauded the continued discussion and cooperation under the NAFTA TWG that resulted in measurable success in aligning pesticide regulation in North America. He added that with the 2008-2013 NAFTA strategy coming to an end, this is an opportunity to discuss the way forward. Dr. Bradbury and Dr. Fragoso Sánchez also emphasized the importance of continuous regulatory cooperation between the NAFTA countries and encouraged stakeholders to provide perspectives on future direction for regulatory cooperation.

¹ National Service for Animal and Plant Health, Food Safety and Quality

² Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food

³ Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios

⁴ Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

The TWG leads provided a comprehensive update on the joint review of pesticides and pollinator -protection activities. It was highlighted that global joint reviews are expanding beyond North American countries and that Mexico has taken an active role either as observer or secondary reviewer. The COFEPRIS representatives expressed their appreciation of being able to increase their technical abilities in the field of risk assessment and eliminating non-tariff barriers to trade through participation in global joint reviews. The SEMARNAT representatives also stated their interest in joint reviews and looked forward to build their technical capacity through this activity.

On the topic of pollinator protection, presentations on respective efforts highlighted the opportunity for more collaboration amongst NAFTA countries on this issue. The Executive Board agreed with the proposal to create a formal NAFTA working group on pollinator protection. The working group will develop a project plan for discussion and approval by the Executive Board at next meeting.

The NAFTA Industry Working Group made a presentation on “*NAFTA TWG 5-Year Strategy (2008-2013) and Moving Forward*” that highlighted the successes of the current strategy and the industry’s recommendations for moving forward. These recommendations were further discussed in Breakout Group 3.

Three BOGs convened on key topics of interest to stakeholders. Government officials facilitated the discussions and a stakeholder representative acted as rapporteur to report back in plenary on the key discussion points. The topics covered by the breakout groups are as follows:

- Breakout Group 1 (BOG 1): Alignment of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)
- Breakout Group 2 (BOG 2): Data Requirements/Science Policy Alignment
- Breakout Group 3 (BOG 3): The Way Forward

During the government meeting held on November 15, the TWG members discussed the BOG reports and various stakeholder comments, and reached agreement on key follow-up items:

Breakout Group 1 (BOG 1): MRL Alignment

The TWG lead working group explored communication on potential export markets prior to submitting an application for a new active ingredient or new use and anticipate the need for MRLs in exporting countries and avoid future trade issues. The working group will continue to coordinate positions at Codex. A progress report will be provided at the next Executive Board meeting.

Breakout Group 2 (BOG 2): Data Requirements/Science Policy Alignment

The Executive Board acknowledged that although significant progress has been made through NAFTA or Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projects and joint working activities, there are still some remaining issues that need

further science policy alignment. The Executive Board welcomed the opportunity of joint scientific discussion between the partners to explore pros and cons of developing common guidance on use of published data/weight of evidence approach. NAFTA team leads were asked to provide updates regarding issues identified in the breakout group to the Executive Board at the next meeting.

Breakout Group 3 (BOG 3): The Way Forward

The focus of the discussion was based on the following questions: What would be the goals important for the next NAFTA five year strategy? What would be the benefit of reaching out to other countries in the Americas? And what are the mechanisms to build on the NAFTA successes at the global level? The Executive Board agreed with the suggestion to increase opportunities for technical information exchange with other countries in Americas as a means to inform them of the value of collaboration. As host of the next NAFTA TWG meeting, Mexico agreed to identify key country contacts and seek their interest in participating in a one-day meeting in the margins of the next NAFTA meeting. The working group will also prepare an annotated outline of the next five-year forward vision for the NAFTA TWG and report back at the next Executive Board meeting.

Other Topics

While not presented during the public session, the NAFTA TWG discussed some key topics of interest to the regulators and agreed on the next steps in these areas. NAFTA officials provided updates on key regulatory cooperation initiatives, including U.S./Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC), global joint reviews, and the regulatory cooperation at the OECD meetings, followed by a verbal update on CODEX meetings held in China and a MRL meeting held in Korea.

Government representatives discussed the scientific challenges of remaining differences in data requirements and risk assessment process. The Executive Board welcomed the opportunity of joint scientific discussion between the partners to identify areas for further alignment in data requirements and risk assessment.

The NAFTA leads also provided an overview and status report on some of the other key science, policy and regulatory initiatives such as 21st Century Toxicology: Integrated Approach to Testing and Assessment (IATA), Developmental Neurotoxicity Test (DNT), Part 158-W (biocide data requirements), Endocrine Disruption, Global Harmonization System (GHS), Joint Re-evaluation/Re-registration, Pollinators and further alignment of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). The Executive Board encouraged EPA and PMRA to continue discussion and cooperative work on biocides. Mexico will share its new MRL regulations and the updated biological efficacy regulation with the U. S. and Canada, when these documents become available for comment.

PMRA and EPA officials committed to continue their cooperation of re-evaluation and registration review activities. Currently, the two agencies are cooperating on the re-evaluation of several active ingredients.

The Executive Board was also updated on the progress of the completion of projects on Groundwater Modelling and Degradation Kinetics. Leads will provide status updates of all NAFTA projects to the Executive Board at the next meeting with the objectives of identifying those to be continued and/or taken to OECD.

The Executive Board concluded the three-day meeting by congratulating all of the TWG members for a productive meeting in Ottawa and thanked the NAFTA government officials and stakeholders for their attendance and participation in the exchange of information and ideas on issues of common interest.

The Executive Board requested the leads to report back on status of Action Items at the next Executive Board meeting. It was announced that Mexico will host the next government stakeholder meeting.