



2014 TRI-NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ACCORD

Twenty-Third Tri-National Agricultural Accord/Accord trinational sur l'agriculture
Acuerdo Agropecuario Tri-Nacional

JOINT COMMUNIQUE: October 9, 2014, Chicago, Illinois, United States


Continuing a long-standing province/state relationship among Canada, the United States (U.S.) and Mexico, the 23rd annual meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord took place in Chicago, Illinois from October 7 to 9, 2014. State and Provincial delegates from five Canadian provinces, five Mexican states and fifteen U.S. states worked together to improve understanding and strengthen collaboration among the agricultural sectors of the three North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) countries. Also in attendance were several senior federal government officials from the three countries.

Illinois Department of Agriculture Director, Bob Flider, welcomed the delegates to the state of Illinois and emphasized the importance of agriculture to all three countries and the importance of officials from all three countries gathering annually to discuss areas of mutual interest. Minister Ron Kostyshyn, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Secretary Manuel Valdés Rodríguez, Queretaro Agricultural Development and Commissioner of International Affairs of the Mexican Association of the States Secretaries of Rural Development (AMSDA); and Director Greg Ibach, Nebraska Department of Agriculture and Vice-President of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) were the delegation leads for each country. Minister Gerry Ritz, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Michael Scuse, Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Raul Urteaga Trani, General Coordinator for International Affairs, SAGARPA addressed the delegates on the importance of agriculture trade to jobs and prosperity in each country. Each emphasized the value of the strong relationships between Mexico, Canada and the U.S. and the importance of collaboration on mutual areas of interest. They highlighted the unique role of the Accord in contributing to the success of NAFTA and the importance of continuing to maintain strong relationships.

The Canada-U.S., Mexico-Canada, and Mexico-U.S. Working Groups also met to discuss their important bi-lateral trade relationships. Food safety, drought and water management, organic standards, Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), and regulatory cooperation were among the issues discussed. The Canada-U.S. delegates approved joint letters to be sent to the U.S. and Canadian federal governments on Regionalization and Zoning for Foreign Animal Disease and Low Level Presence Policy. They also agreed to establish working groups on bee health and pollinators, transportation and Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus. The Tri-lateral Working Groups on Harmonization and Rural Development met to discuss areas of mutual interest related to trade of agriculture products, including impacts of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus, transportation and trade, consumer perception and agricultural awareness, and local food initiatives.

The delegates reaffirmed the value of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord as a forum to address trade issues of importance to all three countries. In addition, the attached joint statements were agreed to by the respective bilateral and tri-lateral working groups.

During the meeting, Mexico extended an invitation to Canada and U.S. to attend the 24th meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord in 2015.


Minister Ron Kostyshyn, Canadian Delegation


Secretary Manuel Valdés Rodríguez, Mexico Delegation


Director Greg Ibach, United States Delegation

23rd Tri-National Agricultural Accord Working Group Joint Statements

Tri-Lateral Harmonization Meeting:

Provincial and State delegates from Canada, the United States and Mexico have agreed to the following joint statements.

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDv)

Delegates from the United States, Canada and Mexico discussed the negative impacts that Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDv) is having on hog producers in each of our three countries. Delegates are committed to supporting our producers in our three countries to stop the spread of PEDv. Delegates discussed how they have been addressing this issue and committed to sharing information and best practices noting the importance of strict biosecurity measures in and around hog farms. Delegates further discussed the importance of cross-border communication and agreed to work collaboratively to mitigate the impacts of future animal disease incidents.

Agricultural Transportation

Mexican, Canadian and United States delegates discussed agriculture transportation issues being experienced by producers in our countries. Delegates believe that the continued economic success of our producers depends on the ability of farmers and all shippers to move their product to market in a timely and efficient manner. The transportation problems and backlogs experienced this year highlight critical weaknesses in our transportation systems that must be addressed. We strongly encourage all members of the agriculture supply chain to fulfill their commitments and continue to work with federal, state, and provincial governments along with producers to ensure that their products efficiently and reliably reach world markets.

Canada-U.S. Bilateral Meeting:

Provincial and State delegates from Canada and the United States have agreed to the following joint statements.

U.S Country of Origin Labelling

Delegates from Canada and the United States (U.S.) had frank discussions on the current World Trade Organization dispute over U.S. mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) between Canada, Mexico and the United States. Canada and Mexico's federal governments have indicated a potential for retaliatory trade restrictions against a wide variety of U.S. products, expanding beyond agriculture goods, should the United States be found to be non-compliant with their WTO obligations. Delegates encourage the federal governments of each nation to determine a path forward that ensures each country can respect its obligations under negotiated regional and international trade agreements.

Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC)

United States and Canadian delegates reaffirmed their support of the United States-Canada Regulatory Cooperation Council (RCC) initiatives focused on the agriculture sector and the new Joint Forward Plan. Delegates are pleased with the progress that has been made to date to harmonize regulations in both countries. Delegates are committed to continuing to provide feedback to the RCC on the initiatives and will encourage stakeholders in their jurisdictions to identify new areas of regulatory alignment of strategic benefit to the sector.

United States Department of Agriculture Small Ruminants Rule

Delegates from Canada and the United States appreciate the work that was done by the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) to finalize and implement its bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) comprehensive rule. However, since 2003 trade in small ruminants between Canada and the United States continues to be disrupted. Delegates strongly encourage the USDA APHIS implement rulemaking on a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) rule as soon as possible in order to normalize trade in small ruminants between the U.S. and Canada.

U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Meeting:

State delegates from the United States and Mexico have agreed to the following joint statements.

Sugar Litigation

Delegates discussed ongoing litigation related to sugar and recognize the complicated dynamics associated with the issue. Delegates encourage all parties to work together to identify a resolution.

Canada-Mexico Bilateral Meeting:

Provincial and state delegates from Canada and Mexico have agreed to the following joint statement.

U.S. Country of Origin Labelling

Delegates from Canada and Mexico believe that the United States (U.S.) mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) discriminates against Canadian and Mexican agriculture and livestock and erodes the integrated livestock and meat processing industry that supports jobs and exports in Canada, Mexico and the United States (U.S.). Delegates believe that if the U.S. is found to be non-compliant with their WTO obligations whereby further regulatory changes by the United States Department of Agriculture are unlikely to bring the COOL rule into compliance, this would lead to retaliatory trade restrictions by the Canadian and Mexican federal governments against a wide variety of U.S. products, expanding beyond agriculture goods. Delegates also believe that further trade restrictions do not solve the problem and add nothing to the economies of Canada, Mexico and the United States. Delegates therefore encourage the United States Federal Government to agree to a legislative fix to COOL that will remove the discrimination and damages caused by the current legislation.