

# 2016 Tri-National Agricultural Accord

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

October 28, 2016



## Tri-National Agricultural Accord

Accord trinational sur l'agriculture  
Acuerdo Agropecuario Tri-Nacional

Continuing a long-standing province/state relationship among Canada, the United States (U.S.) and Mexico, the 25th annual meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord took place in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada from October 26-28, 2016.

State and Provincial delegates from 6 Canadian provinces, 1 Mexican state and 23 U.S. states worked together to improve understanding and strengthen collaboration among the agricultural sectors of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) countries. Also in attendance were several senior federal government officials from the three countries.

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada gave opening remarks and spoke about NAFTA and its importance to the growth and competitiveness of the agriculture sector in all three countries. He noted the benefits of collaboration at the provincial/state level. Minister MacAulay also expressed the importance of trade and cooperation among the three trading partners.

This year's host, The Honourable Jeff Leal, Minister of Ontario Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, along with the leads of the U.S. and Mexican delegations, Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and Secretary Hector Padilla Gutierrez, Jalisco Rural Development for Mexico, welcomed the delegates to Ontario. Together, they emphasized the importance of agriculture and food processing to all three countries and the importance of officials from all three countries gathering annually to discuss areas of mutual interest.

The delegation leads highlighted the unique role of the Accord in contributing to the success of NAFTA and the importance of continuing to maintain strong relationships, building understanding among Mexico, U.S. and Canada on our agri-food sectors.

The Canada-U.S., Mexico-Canada, and U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Working Groups also met to discuss the importance of their individual bilateral trade relationships. Issues discussed included the proposed Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) permanent marking requirements for cattle and small ruminants, dairy, wheat trade, wine regulations, GMO labelling, pollinator health, organic standards and transportation issues. The Trilateral Working Group on Regulatory Harmonization discussed different approaches to growing the food processing sector and how the NAFTA partners can work together to strengthen North American competitiveness. The Trilateral Working Group on Rural Development met to discuss the impacts on agriculture of changing climate and severe weather-related incidents and the need for mitigation and adaptation to build resiliency in the sector.

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

During the meeting, the U.S. extended an invitation to Canada and Mexico to attend the 25th Meeting of the Tri-National Agricultural Accord in Denver, Colorado from October 17-19, 2017.

  
Secretary Hector Padilla Gutierrez

  
The Honourable Jeff Leal

  
Secretary Jeff Witte



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**Tri-Lateral Joint Statements**

**Agri-Food Export Growth Opportunities**

Delegates from Canada, Mexico and the U.S. recognized the opportunity to enhance our global leadership position in food exports by fostering a regulatory environment that supports a North American competitive advantage in food production. Delegates stressed the need to further harmonize regulatory approaches in areas of mutual interest such as labelling and food safety, and agreed to continue to collaborate in order to encourage growth in the agri-food sector, particularly with respect to value-added products.

**Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Emerging Animal Diseases**

Delegates from Mexico, Canada, and the United States recognize the significant negative impacts the recent highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreaks had on poultry producers and the health and welfare of poultry across North America. We agree to support the trilateral collaboration being undertaken by the three trading partners at the federal level to improve early detection and surveillance activities, and to work collaboratively to mitigate the impacts of future animal disease incidents. Delegates also support the establishment of joint zoning initiatives in advance of disease outbreaks to control highly contagious animal disease outbreaks while maintaining trade in animal and animal products. We will work together with our respective industries to facilitate these activities through cross-border communication and sharing information on best practices and lessons-learned to mitigate the impact future HPAI incidents or other emerging disease issues may have on North American producers.

**International Free Trade Agreements: Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)**

Delegates from Canada, Mexico and the U.S. reaffirmed the importance of strengthening global ties and international trade to grow our respective economies and discussed the potential benefits and strategic implications of the TPP. Delegates continue to encourage cooperation on efforts to build awareness and understanding among North American agriculture stakeholders of the strategic implications and opportunities resulting from the TPP. We commit to continued cooperation as the agreement proceeds through the ratification process in national legislatures and to continue emphasizing the important role of trade agreements for agriculture.

## **Canada-U.S. – Joint Statements:**

### **Dairy**

Delegates from Canada and the U.S. had frank discussions on dairy trade between the two countries. U.S. delegates expressed concerns over recent developments and proposed actions by the Canadian dairy industry. U.S. delegates emphasized concerns about economic impacts on U.S. dairy producers. Dialogue will continue at the Canada-U.S. Bilateral Working Group and it is requested by delegates that discussions continue through the Canada-U.S. Consultative Committee on Agriculture (CCA).

### **Provincial Wine Regulations**

Delegates from Canada and the U.S. discussed regulations in some provinces regarding the sale of wine. U.S. delegates expressed concerns related to the implications for wine exported to Canada. Delegates from Canada and the U.S. commit to further dialogue.

### **Wheat Trade**

Delegates from Canada and the U.S. discussed the Canadian grain handling system and requirements for wheat. U.S. delegates expressed concerns that grading requirements result in de facto segregation. U.S. and Canadian delegates recognized the need for varieties registered in Canada and grown in the U.S. to be graded the same as if it had been grown in Canada. Delegates from the U.S. and Canada agreed to continue dialogue and to encourage reforms that mutually strengthen the U.S.-Canada trade environment and support innovation.

### **Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) for Small Ruminants**

Delegates from Canada acknowledged and thanked U.S. State Agriculture officials for the repeal of COOL requirements for beef and pork. However, Canadian and U.S. delegates recognized that COOL requirements continue to pose challenges for the sheep and goat industries. Delegates from both countries agreed to continue dialogue and to encourage reforms that mutually strengthen the U.S.-Canada trade environment.

### **GMO Labelling**

Delegates in Canada and the U.S. discussed the U.S.' *National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard*, which requires the mandatory disclosure of products containing ingredients derived from GMOs. As the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) develops the regulations, delegates committed to share information and continue to dialogue.

### **Grain Transportation**

Canadian and U.S. delegates discussed the importance of efficient transportation systems to the grain industry and recognized and reiterated their support for continuous improvement in order to be a reliable supplier of agriculture and agri-food products to customers in North America and around the world.

### **Pollinator Health**

Delegates from the U.S. and Canada reaffirmed the important role commercially managed honeybees and other pollinators play in crop pollination, honey production, and ecosystem health across North America.

## **Canada-Mexico Joint Statement**

### **Organic Standards Equivalency**

Delegates from Mexico and Canada acknowledged each other's on-going collaboration in the current negotiations on a Mexico-Canada organic standards equivalency agreement. Delegates noted that good progress has been made, and discussed the importance of building equivalency agreements between each other, and in the longer term, working towards a North American wide organic standards equivalency.

## **United States-Mexico Joint Statement**

### **Dairy**

Delegates from Mexico and the U.S. ask both federal governments to continue efforts related to recent Canadian actions, including provincial actions and the Agreement in Principle ("Agreement") recently concluded between Canada's dairy producers and processors, which are contrary to Canada's obligations under both the WTO and NAFTA, as well as principles negotiated under the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Delegates agree these actions could impact the ability of producers from Mexico and the U.S. to make use of access to the Canadian market that has been negotiated under NAFTA and other agreements. Delegates from Mexico and the U.S. respectfully urge the provincial and federal governments of Canada to prevent and eliminate unfair practices that may affect the trade of dairy products within the region.