



STATE OF IDAHO

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18TH TRI-NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL ACCORD

United States, Canada and Mexico Agriculture Officials meet in Idaho

Coeur d'Alene, ID – The secretaries, commissioners, directors, ministers and senior government officials from the Canadian provinces, U.S. states and Mexican states met August 13 – 16th at the 18th Tri-National Agricultural Accord in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Minnesota Commissioner Gene Hugoson led the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) delegation. Celia Gould, Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Governor C. L. "Butch" Otter welcomed the delegation to Idaho. Approximately 25 States and provinces were represented at the Accord.

The Tri-National Agricultural Accord first established in 1986, is designed to provide a forum for information exchange among the U.S. state directors, secretaries and commissioners of agriculture, the ten Canadian provincial ministers of agriculture and Mexico's state secretaries of agriculture and rural development. The Accord seeks to avoid costly and divisive legal trade actions; to resolve minor trade disputes among the three countries; and to address common cross-border agri-food issues. It is intended to provide an opportunity and mechanism for Canadian provinces and U.S. and Mexican states to exchange information, views and suggestions on various aspects of the agriculture and food industries in their respective jurisdictions.

"Each Accord gives us an opportunity to address issues affecting the NAFTA countries and explore creative ideas which often lead to new solutions to improve trade. Working together opens the gateway to results, which benefits both the producer and consumer," said Director Gould.

The Mexican delegation was led by Sinaloa Secretary Jorge Kondo Lopez and President of the Mexican Association of the States Secretaries of Rural Development (AMSDA). Rosann Wowchuk, Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives for the Province of Manitoba led the Canadian delegation.

The delegates met in tri-lateral meetings on rural development and harmonization. In addition, delegates heard a report on climate change. Three bi-lateral working group meetings were held and at each session the countries reviewed and updated work plans for the coming year.

Texas Commissioner Todd Staples co-chaired the U.S. / Mexico Accord Working Group and Minnesota Commissioner Gene Hugoson co-chaired the U.S./Canada Accord Working Group. The third bilateral meeting was held between the delegates of Mexico and Canada.

During the bi-lateral meetings, the Consultative Committee on Agriculture (CCA) representatives Mike Yost, Administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Blair Coomber of Canada and Victor Villalobos of Mexico, provided a report to their respective bi-lateral country meetings. USDA Under Secretary Nancy Montanez Johner, Dept. of Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services also provided remarks on nutrition programs and initiatives.

At the conclusion of the Accord a communique was released along with other meeting materials which will be posted on NASDA's website at <http://www.nasda.org/Accord/index.htm>.

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