

**Tri-National Agricultural Accord  
Canada/United States Working Group  
2002-2003 WORK PLAN**

**Pacific Northwest Meeting on Ornamental Issues and Opportunities  
Seattle, WA  
October 24, 2002**

As agreed at the May 2002 meeting of Canada/United States Accord Working Group, the Province of British Columbia, and States of Oregon and Washington organized a meeting of ornamental industry leaders from British Columbia, Oregon and Washington to address regional issues and opportunities. The meeting was hosted by the Washington Department of Agriculture in Seattle on October 24, 2002, and co-chaired Bill Brookreson, Deputy Director, Washington Department of Agriculture; Honourable John van Dongen, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, British Columbia; and Gary Macinich, Oregon Department of Agriculture. Officials of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) participated in an expert capacity. A list of government and industry attendees is attached.

A keynote address was made by Barry Penner, President of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, and Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Mr. Penner spoke on – “Interdependence and Opportunity in the Pacific North West”.

Industry representatives from British Columbia, Washington and Oregon provided overviews of their ornamental industries. Common concerns identified included labor (costs; shortage of skilled labor; aging workforce; unionization); the regulatory environment and how to reduce the regulatory burden (especially as it relates to pesticide availability and pricing); the current disconnect between supply and demand and resulting depressed prices; uncertainty about natural gas and electricity prices; lack of research in the ornamental industry, and the difficulty in promoting the concerns and needs of the agriculture industry in each jurisdiction.

Discussion arising from the industry presentations focused on and identified four issues of common concern:

- 1) Regulatory Harmonization. The desirability of harmonizing the regulatory environment for the ornamental industries in the Pacific North West was discussed at length. It was agreed that pesticide access and pricing in the region needed to be addressed and harmonized by governments. Growers in Canada and the US have access to different pesticides, and pesticides have different prices on each side of the border.
- 2) Improving Regional Government/Industry Communication. The desirability and need to improve communication among the ornamental industries in the region; and among the state and provincial governments in the region, was identified. It was agreed that this regional meeting organized under the Accord, bringing together state/province industries and governments, and federal regulatory officials, was valuable. Discussion centered on how this might be institutionalized and made an annual event and how the ornamental industry could work together to more effectively bringing their concerns forward to governments. The British Columbia Plant Protection Advisory Council was cited as an example of how industry and government are brought together in that jurisdiction, and the question was raised whether it could be expanded to link with similar groups in

Oregon and Washington and how to achieve this. Washington State Department of Agriculture offered to host a similar regional government / ornamental industry meeting in 2003 to build on the momentum for improved regional communication.

- 3) Improving Industry/Government Communication in Each Jurisdiction. Industry participants discussed and agreed that they needed to be more effective and organized in communicating with their state / provincial and federal governments in their respective jurisdiction. Washington and Oregon industry representative said they needed to become more involved with government and work more closely with the USDA. Washington industry representatives observed that in Washington there are has many different groups representing ornamentals, and consequently they do not have one effective voice. A need was identified to strengthen or create a single association for Washington ornamental growers (and Washington Department of Agriculture offered assistance). British Columbia industry representatives discussed and recommended the British Columbia Agricultural Council (BCAC) as a model. BCAC represents most of British Columbia's agriculture industries, and plays an important agricultural advocacy role for growers with government. BCAC also runs an "Ag Aware" campaign which promotes careers in agriculture and is used to educate the general public on the importance of agriculture to the provincial economy.
- 4) Coordination of Ornamental Research
  - Ornamental industry representatives discussed and agreed that there was too little ornamental research being undertaken by industry and government in their jurisdiction. British Columbia representatives said that there is limited ornamental research funded by government in British Columbia, and research fund dollars are dropping. The British Columbia Landscape and Nursery Association is now taking a lead role in research and pesticide issues for nursery crops. Washington and Oregon industry representatives noted that floriculture is the third most valuable U.S. crop after corn and soybeans in size, but they do not have anything resembling a comparable research budget. \$2 million is invested in research through the Society of American Florists. In Washington State industry pays a surcharge that contributes \$150,000 to research per year. It was agreed by industry representatives that there is a need to share and coordinate research within the region to maximize the effectiveness research dollars. Discussion then turned to how this might be accomplished; how to distribute the information and how to improve communication between industry and academic researchers.

Representatives from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the USDA APHIS made a presentation on Canada- United States border management, including the Canada-United States Smart Borders Initiative and the impact on APHIS of the establishment Department of Homeland Security by the U.S. federal government.

Representatives from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, USDA APHIS, the Washington Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Department of Agriculture addressed pest management issues related to the ornamental industry. It was noted that cosmopolitan pests, such as thrips and aphids, cross the border in both directions. Eradication is an important part of many of the pest control programs in each jurisdiction, budget, political will early detection and good pesticides to ensure success. It was noted that there is need to harmonize quarantine and import activities and that the North American perimeter is the real border from a pest perspective, not the Canada-United States border. Discussion focused on four pest management issues in the region: Sudden Oak Death Syndrome (SODS), Chrysanthemum White Rust (CWR), Blueberry Scorch Virus, and Citrus Longhorned Beetle.

The meeting closed with the intention to support a strong, viable ornamental industry in the Pacific North West, characterized by regional collaboration and cooperation that supports the advancement of industry in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Many commonalities and shared challenges were identified among the three jurisdictions and industries. By uniting on key issues the regional industry will benefit. Agreement was reached on Issues and Action Plans.

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**Agreed Issues and Actions Plans**

**Issue - Harmonization**

- 1.1 *Reduction and harmonization of regulatory requirements in the Pacific North West*
- 1.2 *Quarantine harmonization in the Pacific North West*

**Action**

- ☐ The three Pacific North West state/provincial governments, as well as industry, should strategically plan and coordinate with respect to pesticide import harmonization and availability in region, quarantine harmonization and the overall regulatory burden.

**Issue – Industry Communication**

- 1.3 *The Pacific North West ornamental industries have more commonalities than differences. Communication needs to be improved to build on this for the mutual benefit of the three industries.*
- 1.4 *How can the Pacific North West Industry work together to identify state and provincial issues and take them forward to our governments?*

**Action**

- ☐ This group committed to beginning to communicate on a regular basis, i.e. by telephone-mail. A complete list of addresses will be compiled for the group.
- ☐ A decision was made for this working group to meet on a regular yearly basis for one full day. Attendees at the meeting would represent Pacific Northwest Industry, Government, Regulatory people, and academics researchers.
- ☐ Pacific North West ornamental industry will use next year's meeting to make its linkages. After that decisions can be made about what formal processes need to be put in place, i.e. formal linkages with other groups.
- ☐ Bill Brookreson, Deputy Director, Washington Department of Agriculture, agreed to put together the list of names and addresses for distribution and organize the next meeting.
- ☐ The main agenda item for the 2003 meeting will be choosing a formal structure for the group.

**Issue – Government-Industry Communication**

- 1.5 *Washington State industry expressed concern over its lack of a cohesive approach to identify and coordinate industry issues to be taken to state government.*

**Action**

- ☐ Strengthen associations throughout the state.
- ☐ British Columbia industry representatives made a commitment to share information on the British Columbia Agriculture Council (BCAC) mechanism in the near.
- ☐ Industry representatives from all three jurisdictions agree to communicate more directly about their challenges and success with government.

**Issue – Industry Research**

- 1.6 *Lack of coordinated a research plan in the Pacific North West ornamental industry*

## **Action**

- Create a coordinated research plan to include:
- Mechanisms for sharing results of research.
- Research dollars are planned for collaboratively in the Pacific Northwest.
- Growers begin to hold academics accountable for relevant and timely research for the ornamental industry.
- Improved communication between industry and researchers.
- Improved research data will give the three jurisdictions more leverage with federal governments.

## **Issue -- Sudden Oak Death Syndrome**

1.7 Improved communication on coordination on Sudden Oak Death Syndrome.

### **Action**

- Action items on issues 1.2 and 1.3 should address this kind of situation in the future.

## **Issue – Public Awareness of Agriculture in the Pacific North West**

1.8 How to educate public regarding the importance of agriculture?

### **Action**

- British Columbia industry to provide information and contacts on its Ag Aware program.

## **2. Issues identified which require further planning.**

- 2.1 Pricing challenges between the three jurisdictions. Washington State industry representatives expressed concern regarding viability over the next five years.
- 2.2 Increase in supply, no increase in demand.
- 2.3 Human Resource management issues:
  - > Skilled labor availability and labor costs
  - > Unionization of workers
  - > Boycott issues
- 2.4 Resource availability and the political will for pest eradication.