

4.1.1 Comparative Report on Environmental Standards

Project Summary

The CEC will convene a workshop of government and other experts to review the findings of the comparative report on Intensive Livestock Operations (ILOs), also referred to as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), and prepare a report to Council on the findings and recommendations arising from the workshop.

Goals and Objectives

To strengthen cooperation on the development and continued improvement of environmental technical requirements and standards by promoting exchange of information and sharing best practices.

The objectives of this project are to:

- share best practices and approaches and identify regulatory gaps.
- prepare a comparative analysis of existing environmental standards in an area of focus for all three NAFTA Parties and
- establish a baseline of regulatory practice from which to evaluate changes and trends in the future.

Expected Results

The workshop will identify best practices, as well as the potential for developing greater compatibility of environmental standards within the respective sovereign regulatory frameworks of each NAFTA Party.

Rationale

The Council is committed under Article 10(3) to strengthen cooperation on the development and continued improvement of environmental laws and regulations by promoting the exchange of information on criteria and methodologies used in establishing domestic environmental standards and, without reducing levels of environmental protection, by establishing a process for developing greater compatibility of environmental technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures in a manner consistent with NAFTA. While NAAEC Article 3 recognizes the right of each of the Parties to establish its own level of domestic environmental protection and environmental development policies and priorities, each Party is also obligated to ensure that its laws and regulations provide for high levels of environmental protection and to strive to continue to improve those laws and regulations. The project is also tied to *A Shared Agenda for Action*, which encourages an analysis of trends in each country's performance and information-sharing in the area of environmental standards.

The CEC chose this topic because surface, ground water and air pollution from large, confined-animal facilities has led to increased government and public scrutiny of existing controls for animal wastes. There is currently a great deal of regulatory agency activity at the state and federal levels in North America, as evidenced by the current spate of hearings and regulatory changes taking place, particularly in the United States and Canada. This issue is perceived as a serious environmental and human health threat. The trend towards increased concentration of intensive livestock operations makes an examination of this issue timely, in a rapidly evolving regulatory context. Sharing regulatory approaches with affected jurisdictions will help diffuse best practices and identify regulatory gaps.

Progress to Date

The CEC comparative study of North American laws and policies related to intensive agriculture practices commenced in 2001 and will be completed in early 2003. This report will form the basis for identifying best practices in North America. The study provides a baseline report on how selected regulatory authorities address environmental and human health concerns associated with intensive livestock operations. The CEC participated in several workshops in late 2002 to share its draft findings with and receive feedback from governmental and nongovernmental experts.

Actions 2003

2003	Estimated Resources Required (C\$)
Action 1: Intensive Agriculture Standards	30,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity 1: Convene workshop of government and other experts to review the findings of the comparative report on intensive agriculture standards.	25,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity 2: Prepare a report to Council on the findings/recommendations arising from the workshop.	5,000
Total Resources Required	30,000

Public Participation

The workshop will be open to the participation of nongovernmental stakeholders.

Expected Partners and/or Participants

The workshop anticipates the collaboration of the appropriate government agencies of each country as well as the necessary experts or institutions both within and outside government.

Linkages to other CEC Projects

The workshop and the comparative study on intensive livestock operations relate closely to one of the NAFTA economic trends identified in project work carried out by the Environment, Economy and Trade program area.