

Board of Directors of PROCINORTE discuss advances in agricultural research between Canada, Mexico and the United States



Participants in the 13th Annual Meeting of the PROCINORTE Board of Directors

October 19, 2011 - The 13th Annual Meeting of the PROCINORTE Board of Directors corresponding to the programming year of 2011 took place in Washington, D.C. on 18-19th October 2011. The meeting was organized by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS/USDA) in coordination with PROCINORTE and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) Office in the US.

The Board is comprised of Dr. Caird Rexroad, Associate Administrator, ARS/USDA; Dr. Brad Fraleigh, Director Intergovernmental Relations, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada- (AAFC); Dr. Pedro Brajcich, Director General of Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Forestales Agrícolas y Pecuarias (INIFAP); and Mr. David Hatch, IICA Representative in the US.

The welcoming remarks were given by Dr. Ann M. Bartuska, Deputy Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Research, Education and Economics. Dr. Bartuska highlighted the priorities of the USDA which included responding to global change and adaptation science, bio-energy and the role of natural resources, food safety (movement of materials from field into production), and connecting research with private sector for commercialization of results.

During the Meeting the Board of Directors reviewed the progress made by the four Task Forces in advancing cooperation on tri-lateral agenda of the benefit for Canada, Mexico and the United



*Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology for the Northern Region
Programa Cooperativo en Investigación y Tecnología Agrícola para la Región Norte*

States. To date, PROCINORTE has supported agricultural research in key areas of tri-lateral importance such as genetic resources, animal and plant health, and fruticulture. The advances presented by representatives of the four Task Forces include strengthening capacities for conservation and management of plant genetic resources, harmonization of molecular protocols for detection of animal viruses of economic importance, and development of standards for fruits.

The members of the Board indicated their satisfaction with the direction of each Task Force and were pleased with the highly qualified professionals that compose these mechanisms of collaboration. These are strong evidences of the high quality of joint research between INIFAP, AAFC and ARS/USDA, as the key backbone of PROCINORTE.

The members of PROCINORTE discussed also new topics of relevance for the region: forest pests and diseases, climate change and invasive species. The Board agreed to will carry out a consultation exercise to identify if there is a niche for PROCINORTE in these topics and to explore synergies with other tri-lateral agencies, such as the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO).

The Board also discussed how best to improve outreach with other regions and PROCIS. In this regard, PROCINORTE is making efforts to include scientists from Latin America in its activities. This is the case of the participation of Ecuadorian and Belizean curators in the Global-GRIN training workshop to be celebrated in Mexico in November 2011. Also they recognized that the participation of officials from the agricultural health regulators in PROCINORTE activities has been a major advancement to harmonize diagnostic protocols between the three countries.

Also pointed out by Dr. Priscila Henríquez, Executive Secretary, PROCINORTE was present in the Foro de las Américas para la Investigación y Desarrollo Tecnológico Agropecuario (FORAGRO) in which the contributions of PROCINORTE to advancing science in the Northern Region were acknowledged.

Dr. Rexroad was elected president of PROCINORTE for a two year term, eligible for a third year. The next meeting will be in Guadalajara, Mexico when the members of the Board and Task Forces will take the opportunity to visit the joint projects in mango and avocado quality carried out by PROCINORTE in that country.

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