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Pest Management Regulatory Agency

Strategic Plan

2008–2013

Protecting Your Health
and the Environment



Canada

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Message from the Executive Director



I am pleased to present the Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency 2008–2013 Strategic Plan which describes the direction of our work for the next five years.

Our Plan continues to place priority upon protecting the health and environment of Canadians. To successfully address the challenges facing the Pest Management Regulatory Agency and fulfill our vision, we have identified six strategic outcomes that will guide our work over the years ahead. For each strategic outcome we have developed specific actions needed to reach our goal. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will focus on these actions to advance our core business, manage key risks, maximize opportunities, support our staff and evolve as an organization. The first three strategic outcomes strengthen the foundation of our programs. The next two strategic outcomes will enhance strategic partnerships and awareness. Finally, the sixth strategic outcome will allow us to create an organization that focuses on leadership and excellence while fostering a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

The Plan will be used as a key resource as we move forward with our work towards realizing our mission and vision that responds to our existing challenges and evolving operating environment.

By working in partnership with stakeholders towards our common goal of protecting the health and environment of Canadians we can move forward together from vision to reality to further strengthen Canada's pesticide regulatory system.

I am deeply indebted to those who have participated so actively in the planning process and in the development of this Plan. My sincere thanks go to the staff and stakeholders for their input and advice.

Richard Aucoin, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Pest Management Regulatory Agency
Health Canada

Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

Continually promoting the highest standards for the protection of health and the environment, based on modern science, Health Canada will be an international force in the regulation of pesticides leading to public confidence and improved access to safer and innovative pesticides for Canadians. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will invest in its workforce, workplace and partnerships to support one of the best pesticide regulatory systems in the world.

Mission

Protecting the health and environment of Canadians and supporting Canadian competitiveness by regulating pesticides and their use in an effective and transparent manner.

Core Values

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency is committed to upholding the following core values to direct our work and enable us to achieve our organizational vision.

Leadership, Accountability and Responsibility

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will maintain a governance structure that effectively supports prioritization, decision-making and management systems that provide relevant information and ensure alignment of accountability instruments.

Transparency, Engagement and Communication

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will maintain timely and open communication to respond to the needs and expectations of all Canadians.

Excellence and Innovation

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will invest in its workforce, workplace and partnerships to support one of the best pesticide regulatory systems in the world.

Highlights of our Progress

Since 2003, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency has focused on improving regulatory performance, initiated new programs to meet the needs of users and managed human and financial resources to foster a motivated and enthusiastic workforce.

A major achievement of the last five years has been the coming into force of the *Pest Control Products Act* in June 2006. The new Act makes the registration system more transparent, strengthens health and environmental protection and post-registration control of pesticides, and supports Canadian growers in gaining quicker access to newer, safer pesticides so they can be competitive in the marketplace. As well, the new Act provides greater flexibility in the area of minor-use registration and improved access to lower risk products.

Additional Highlights

- We made significant progress in our efforts to standardize pesticide regulation globally. We worked with the United States, Mexico, the European Union, Australia, Japan and other members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and Codex Alimentarius on numerous initiatives. These efforts facilitated numerous joint reviews and work shares, thereby making the registration process more efficient and providing timely access to a number of new products of importance to Canadians.
- A significant improvement in the registration process was the launch of the electronic Pesticide Regulatory System (e-PRS) in 2004, which allows the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to receive, manage, evaluate and report on registration activities in a fully electronic environment. Thousands of registration applications, incident reports, re-evaluations and other submissions are processed and reviewed annually using e-PRS.
- Under the North American Free Trade Agreement Technical Working Group on Pesticides (NAFTA TWG), the first NAFTA label was approved in 2007. Products with a NAFTA label can move freely across the American–Canadian border to quickly address pest outbreaks and reduce price differentials in the North American marketplace.
- A first in Canada’s Public Service, our competency-based Science Development Program has produced 86 graduates and promoted 123 staff since 2003. As a result of these efforts, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency benefits from one of the highest retention rates in the Department.

Emerging Challenges

Pesticide regulation is becoming a global activity, and governments are working together to address associated science and policy issues while maintaining national standards. The challenges for managing pesticide programs have led to new and innovative ideas, such as risk-reduction strategies, global joint reviews and work sharing.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency will face numerous challenges in the coming years. We operate in an increasingly complex environment influenced by a number of factors—public expectations and awareness, evolving science and technology, the global regulatory environment, and government priorities. These factors influence how we carry out our mandate and deliver our programs and services to meet the evolving needs of our stakeholders and Canadians. They also reinforce the need for coordinated government action, partnerships and collaboration.

Public Expectations and Awareness

Governments in Canada and around the world are faced with greater scrutiny stemming from the public's growing awareness, concerns and expectations for their health and safety.

Canadians demand that government provide basic protective measures, such as access to safer products. The Canadian public has high expectations of government's ability to guard against, prevent or quickly address any threat to human health, the environment or the economy, as well as provide timely and informative communications.

The Canadian public expects more open and transparent decision-making and improved access to the information that regulatory authorities use to make decisions.

Evolving Science and Technology

Rapid advances in science and technology create new opportunities for improving the quality of life, performance of the economy and better science-based regulatory decisions; however, they also pose regulatory challenges.

Modern science is yielding new technologies and products that were unimaginable until recently—the rapidly expanding fields of biotechnology, genomics and nanotechnology are creating new product development opportunities.

Risk assessments must incorporate evolving science and technology, both for the evaluation of new products and for the re-evaluation of older products. Governments need to ensure that regulations and other statutory instruments remain current and sufficiently flexible to address potential risks and questions that evolving science and new technology generate.

Global Regulatory Environment

International partnerships, accelerated scientific innovation, greater mobility of products across borders and increased access to communications technology have made governments and economies around the world increasingly interconnected and interdependent.

Globalization is opening new avenues for international cooperation, but also creating concerns about product safety. A companion to growing international trade is an increasing requirement for international standards. This requires governments to be attentive to international dimensions when weighing policy options and making regulatory decisions.

International agreements and trade treaties are aligning standards, product reviews and regulatory approaches around the globe. Collaborative efforts to share pre-market and post-market information and to address human health, safety and environmental issues promptly have become essential.

Our 2008–2013 Strategies

The strategic directions presented in this plan reflect our new vision and mission, both which constitute the foundation for the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's ongoing success. Our Plan places priority upon protecting the health and environment of Canadians. To successfully address the challenges facing the Agency and fulfill our vision, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency has identified six strategic outcomes that will guide our work over the next five years. For each strategic outcome, we have developed key strategies to delineate the activities needed. We will focus on these strategies to advance our core business, manage key risks, maximize opportunities, support our staff and evolve as an organization.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1:

By contributing to and benefiting from science internationally, our assessments and decisions will integrate cutting-edge science and we will use a progressive approach based on level of anticipated risk.

Modern Science

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency's objective in administering the *Pest Control Products Act* is to protect Canadian's health and environment from the risks associated with pesticides. Pesticides are regulated using a science-based approach that is rigorous, modern, and internationally recognized.

As science evolves our approach to product evaluation, risk management, and compliance with the Act and Regulations must be updated. Knowledge and uncertainties regarding the science must be clearly stated and assumptions tested so that we can be confident no harm will result when pesticides are used according to label directions.

STRATEGIES:

1. Identify best practices internationally in the use of alternatives to testing approaches and integrate them to the extent possible.
2. Achieve excellence in the use of modern risk assessment methods, such as probabilistic assessments, where appropriate in our health and environmental risk assessments.
3. Use our current knowledge about the range of anticipated risks of pesticides to determine the evidence needed to support decision-making.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2:

Canadians will be better informed about how Health Canada regulates pesticides and how they should be used, and will be confident in the results.

Public Confidence

To increase public confidence in our pesticide regulatory system, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's operations must be open, transparent, accessible and accountable. Canadians should be aware that pesticides used in Canada have undergone a rigorous assessment and meet high Canadian standards to protect human health and the environment.

Incorporating the views of citizens and stakeholders into policy and decision-making processes is a critical success factor to regulate pesticides effectively in the public domain. Maintaining and strengthening public confidence is especially important because the accelerating rate of scientific and technological advances presents both benefits and risks.

STRATEGIES:

1. Develop and implement strategies to provide Canadians with timely and accessible information that they can trust on pesticides and how they should be used in order to protect their health and the environment.
2. Develop effective communication strategies and products that inform Canadians on how Health Canada regulates pesticides.
3. Better involve Canadians in our consultation and decision-making.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3:

We will have established with partners a comprehensive framework for continuous evaluation and management of risks and value of pesticides throughout their life cycle.

Life Cycle Management

In collaboration with our partners, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency will strengthen its “life cycle” approach to pesticide regulation. The goal is to ensure that human health and the environment are protected by providing targeted levels of oversight at various stages of a pesticide’s life cycle, based on the level of risk posed.

The regulation of pesticides in Canada is a shared responsibility between the federal government, provinces and territories. Federal regulatory oversight should be implemented in a way that minimizes duplication with other regulatory programs, integrates stewardship initiatives and supports the competitiveness of sectors of Canadian industry that rely on pesticides.

STRATEGIES:

1. Establish and implement with partners a comprehensive framework for life cycle management of pesticides.
2. Strengthen post-registration activities, including monitoring the exposure and effects of pesticides and integrate those results into regulatory decision-making (assumption validation).
3. Anticipate and respond to emerging issues and technologies in the life cycle of a pesticide.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4:

As an influential international voice, we will have achieved high international standards for protection of human health and the environment, and Canadians will have timely access to safer and innovative pesticides.

International Regulatory Cooperation

Our role internationally in the development of standards for the regulation of pesticides is one of our most noted successes to date. Today we are a key player in global joint reviews along with the United States, the European Union and Australia.

There is growing recognition within regulatory departments and agencies, as well as the pesticide industry worldwide, that evolving science and increasing workloads are best addressed through collaborative efforts. As a small market, Canada has had difficulty attracting newer, lower risk products for registration. The global joint reviews provide a mechanism to ensure the best and safest products are available for use in Canada. While these measures will help reduce the widening of the gap in available pesticides, innovative approaches will be needed to address the gap that currently exists.

STRATEGIES:

1. Advocate for the adoption of high international regulatory standards based on modern, cutting-edge science.
2. Increase the profile of our modern, efficient regulatory process (e.g. electronic regulatory submission process, expedited reviews for priority agricultural chemicals).
3. Continue to make global joint reviews the preferred option for evaluation of new pesticides and re-evaluation of older pesticides.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5:

We will have enhanced strategic partnerships to support the effective delivery of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's mandate.

Partnerships

Critical to our success will be effectively engaging our stakeholders, piloting new approaches to life cycle management for pesticides and strengthening our public involvement strategies.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency delivers its mandate in many areas of shared jurisdiction and responsibility. Strong partnerships with other federal government departments and agencies, as well as with provincial and territorial authorities, are imperative to our success. All share responsibility for delivering the programs that support the integrity of Canada's pesticide regulatory system.

We remain committed to strengthening links with our many stakeholders. We will build on our existing mechanisms to ensure that communications with all stakeholders remain open and clear.

STRATEGIES:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive framework for engaging partners.
2. Strengthen co-operation with provincial and territorial pesticide regulators, other Health Canada branches, other federal departments and agencies, and interest groups.
3. Establish partnerships to improve the way we collect, assess, disseminate and act on risk and value information about pesticides throughout their life cycle.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 6:

We want to be a dynamic organization focussed on leadership, opportunity and excellence in science and the Public Service by fostering a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

Excellence and Innovation

Fulfilling our mission and achieving our vision requires strong leadership and collaborative management. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency must ensure that our leaders effectively manage staff, maintain continuity of leadership, sustain a learning environment and share critical knowledge. We must continue to use our Science Development Program to fill gaps in critical skills, knowledge and competencies and work as partners in Health Canada's talent management strategy.

STRATEGIES:

1. Identify, attract, develop and engage talented people.
2. Manage the organization in a way that is consistent with Public Service values, ethics and policies.
3. Empower our people to effect change through innovation and knowledge.

Moving Forward

As we strive to achieve our vision and deliver on the strategies outlined in this Plan, we must adhere to our core values and our legislative mandate to protect human health and the environment, and carefully consider the potential impacts of our actions. We must manage our workloads and expectations so that our organizational goals can be achieved.

The views of stakeholders, partners and the Canadian public must be understood and incorporated into our business planning and operations. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency is fully prepared to meet the challenges of the next five years and is committed to providing Canadians with an innovative, responsive and accountable pesticide regulatory system.

We will report progress made on this strategic plan on a yearly basis through various planning and reporting documents, including the PMRA's annual report to Parliament.

