

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(1) From your agency's point of view, what regulations can be reduced to improve communication and cooperation between federal, state, and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region?

Communication and cooperation among federal, state and local governments within the Texas-Mexico border region is very important to facilitating trade. Simplification and streamlining of the paperwork process for animal health documentation and other product paperwork would increase communication on animal health and trade issues. There is inconsistency in information and the number of documents required for export (especially between different ports of entry), and companies incur extra expenses until they get the proper paperwork together. The required documentation also seems to change constantly. This causes delays of getting product into stores, and if a company has perishable commodities, this delay causes a shorter shelf life for those products. Increased understanding and sharing of information on sanitary and phytosanitary requirements would also improve communication and cooperation.

(2) What are the main trade issues between the United States and Mexico that you have identified as having an impact (both positive and negative) on your agency or your area of work?

While working with several Texas companies that export to Mexico, the following trade issues have been identified as having an impact on their businesses:

Positive impact

- NAFTA helped to reduce duties to zero, making export prices more competitive. It also helped eliminate "connections" at the border, whereby some companies were able to cross into Mexico without paying the full duties, causing more price competition for legitimate exporters.
- NAFTA has made it cheaper and easier to get products across the border.

Negative impact

- One significant trade issue for Texas livestock producers is the continued closure of the border to exports of cattle to Mexico. Protocols are in place to allow dairy cattle to be exported, but so far none have been allowed to do so. The closure has cost producers much in lost revenue and reduced shipments through the TDA export facilities.
- Additionally, livestock inspections are being conducted in Mexico instead of the U.S. This has resulted in many issues and problems all along the border as noted above. The number of livestock being exported to Mexico has fallen and problems occur when producers try to re-enter their livestock into the U.S.
- The Mexican product labeling law is of concern to exporting companies. If a company has several distributors, the product's label can only list one distributor. This causes

inefficiencies at the plant during production because the company has to have separate print runs (for the labels) for each customer, resulting in extra costs.

- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) issues have caused companies with high-value added meat products to lose a large amount of sales.
- Trucks cannot cross the border because of a lack of common standards between the U.S. and Mexico with regard to safety and environmental issues, so there has to be a change of trailers, resulting in loss of time and money.

(3) Having studied the flow of commerce at ports of entry between this state and Mexico, including the movement of commercial vehicles across the border, what actions would you establish to aid that commerce and improve the movement of those vehicles?

There have been a number of complaints that the wait to be inspected at roadside weight stations and to get into Mexico to be inspected have caused added stress and heat exhaustion for livestock in transit. Increased communication and information sharing regarding necessary documentation and protocols could possibly improve the movement of those vehicles.

(4) How do you work with federal officials to resolve transportation issues involving infrastructure, including roads and bridges, to allow for the efficient movement of goods and people across the border between Texas and Mexico?

We regularly work with various individuals, organizations and agencies in the U.S. and in Mexico, to clarify export requirements and assist exporters in the smooth shipment of their livestock and agricultural products.

(5) How does your agency work with federal officials to create a unified federal agency process to streamline border crossing needs?

Please see response to question four (4).

(6) Has your agency identified problems involved with border truck inspections and related trade and transportation infrastructure? What are those? What solutions/recommendations does your agency propose?

Please see responses to questions three (3) and four (4).

(7) How do you work to increase funding for the North American Development Bank to assist in the financing of water and wastewater facilities?

N/A

(8) Has your agency explored the sale of excess electric power from Texas to Mexico? What are your findings?

N/A

(9) Has your agency identified any areas of environmental protection that need to be addressed cooperatively between Texas and the Mexican states? If so, which are those areas and what type of protective measures need to be taken?

TDA participates in several agricultural and urban water conservation initiatives. The goal of these initiatives is to further develop water conservation and irrigation technology that is specifically applicable to the basin's needs and decide what type of educational programs are needed to increase water use efficiencies.

(10) Has your agency identified common challenges to health care on which all border states can collaborate? If so, what are those challenges and how can all border states collaborate to overcome them?

N/A

(11) Has your agency developed any recommendations to address border challenges in general? If so, what are they?

N/A

(12) What programs and services does your agency offer to border communities?

Please see attached document on TDA Major Border and Cross Border Initiatives.

(13) What are some regulatory and/or legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine programs and services?

N/A

(14) Please share any considerations from your agency regarding the effect of policies instituted by the federal government impacting the border region.

Please see responses to questions one (1) and two (2).

(15) Please give a brief summary of all your agency's activities related to the Border and/or Mexico.

Please see attached document on TDA Major Border and Cross Border Initiatives.