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NEWS Release

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IR-4 Efforts to Provide Knowledge and Capacity on Pesticide MRLs is Recognized

Princeton, NJ — On December 11, 2017, seventeen senior government officials signed a joint statement acknowledging the productive work of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in building knowledge and capacity for developing countries in the area of pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs).

STDF provided the funding for the USDA's IR-4 Project to provide the direct training for each country involved. IR-4 trained the countries in how to conduct both field and laboratory trials under Good Laboratory Practices. The data from these trials was submitted to the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) with the ultimate goal of establishing new MRLs based on this data.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, issued the following statement in response to the joint statement signed at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires: "USDA applauds the joint statement on pesticide MRLs issued today at the WTO ministerial in Buenos Aires. The 17 signatory countries have come together to recognize that farmers worldwide must be able to access the full range of available tools and technologies in order to remain productive and competitive. But too often, that access is hampered by non-scientific regulatory barriers."

Marlynn Hopper from the STDF Secretariat at WTO commented, "We were delighted to see this reference to the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in the Joint Statement from MC-11, signed by 17 governments. It's wonderful to see this concrete illustration of how the three STDF MRL projects in Africa, ASEAN and Latin America – with USDA, IR-4/Rutgers University and the many other public and private sector partners – helped to build knowledge and capacity on pesticide MRLs in developing countries, and also played a catalytic role in encouraging more regional and international collaboration on this topic."

Jason Sandahl, Senior Program Manager, USDA/FAS Science & Technology Capacity Building Branch, commented, "Thanks IR-4, for being such great partners with USDA. This program is just starting, and we expect to see even greater successes in the future."

IR-4 Executive Director, Jerry Baron stated, "IR-4's mission is to bring pest management solutions to growers thereby becoming partners in agriculture. We are proud to be associated with this work and thank the STDF for providing the means to conduct this research."

To learn more about IR-4 and these projects visit: www.ir4.rutgers.edu and STDF at www.standardsfacility.org.

To review the joint statement please visit:

https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/WT_MIN_17_52%20-%20Joint%20Statement%20-%20Trade%20in%20Food%20and%20AG%20Products.pdf

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Major funding for IR-4 is provided by Special Research Grants and Hatch Act Funds from USDA-NIFA, in cooperation with the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, and USDA-ARS.



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About IR-4

The IR-4 Project is a multi-agency-funded program for facilitating the registration of existing pesticides for use on specialty crops. Established in 1963 as a collaborative effort of the USDA-National Institute of Food and state Agricultural Experiment Stations (SAES) at Land Grant Universities, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the crop protection industry, specialty crop growers and commodity associations. Research is conducted in coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The IR4 Project assists in the collection of residue and efficacy data in support of the registration of minor uses of pesticides. The IR-4 Project is headquartered at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and is geographically diversified through regional centers housed in Land Grant Universities and ARS facilities across the US.

At the request of US EPA, IR-4 personnel have been part of the US delegation to both the CCPR and OECD Working Group on Pesticides (WGP). IR-4 plays a key role on the OECD Expert Group on Minor Uses (EGMU) which works to assist countries, registrants, and growers in solving their minor use problems (i.e. needs, gaps) through activities associated with baseline information, collaborative data generation, data sharing, and joint reviews.

IR-4 continues to work with other specialty crop programs throughout the world to reduce the data development burden on individual countries. In addition to Canada, other countries have begun establishing minor use programs or are considering expanding existing programs. The knowledge and expertise of IR-4 has been solicited as these new programs evolve and develop; at the same time IR-4 expects this will open doors to US exports by encouraging these countries to develop a similar regulatory structure that recognizes US MRLs.

IR-4's work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Agricultural Experiment Station Hatch Multistate, with substantial cooperation and support from other State Agricultural Experiment Stations, USDA-ARS, USDA-APHIS and USDA-FAS. Funding is also provided from industry partners and commodity groups. In accordance with Federal Law and USDA policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability

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