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USMCA PANEL HEARING ON MEXICAN CORN AND GLYPHOSATE RESTRICTIONS TO BE HELD THIS WEEK

Panel should expand hearing beyond questions of science to examine Indigenous rights and economic impacts

MINNEAPOLIS—The next phase of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) dispute regarding Mexico's regulations on genetically modified (GM) corn and glyphosate enters a pivotal stage with a public hearing scheduled for June 26 and 27 in Mexico City (9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mexico City time). During the trade hearing, panelists will engage with arguments from both the United States and Mexico before reaching a preliminary decision expected this fall.

Since 2019, Mexico has pursued a policy aimed at reducing reliance on imported GM corn and phasing out glyphosate, citing goals of bolstering food sovereignty and transitioning to agroecological practices. These measures were met with a formal dispute filed by the U.S. in August 2023 under the USMCA, alleging violations of Sanitary and Phytosanitary standards and discriminatory trade practices against U.S. agricultural exports.

During this week's hearing, three expert panelists will adjudicate the case, likely focusing on the dueling notions that the U.S. standards and their scientific basis are sound, versus the Mexican evidence from newer studies of potential harm to human health and the need for a precautionary approach. Both parties have submitted extensive documentation and rebuttals.

While the science around GM corn will be the centerpiece of the debate, according to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) and partners, panelists should raise questions on other crucial issues:

- **Where's the economic harm?** The U.S. claims that Mexico's rules on GM corn will undermine exports, but U.S. corn exports to Mexico have increased since the Decree was issued.
- **Does USMCA allow Mexico to meet its commitments to Indigenous peoples and on biodiversity?** The U.S. acknowledges the importance of Mexico's commitments but claims they don't matter in this case.
- **Should Mexico's farm policies be stuck in 2020 forever?** The U.S. essentially claims it expected Mexico's policies on corn would continue without change after the USMCA went into effect.

"Mexico's restrictions on GM corn and glyphosate are essential elements of a national strategy to enhance agroecological production of corn and other basic grains in ways that enhance stability in national markets, reduce emissions and safeguard biodiversity. The growing climate emergency and periodic market crises due to war or disease mean that business as usual is not an answer. The panel should ensure that the steps taken in the USMCA text to create principled flexibility to meet these challenges aren't wiped away," stated IATP's Director of Trade and International Strategies Karen Hansen-Kuhn.

Following this week's hearings, the panel is scheduled to issue a preliminary report in September, with a final decision anticipated in November.

For more information and updates on the USMCA dispute hearing, visit [IATP's dedicated page](#).

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