

- 7.3 The inconsistency of information and paperwork requirements of the three countries at their borders is an on-going problem that could be resolved, particularly if a common set of data requirements was established. In many cases, there is a paperwork overload in the form of vastly different official documents, particularly for products moving from Canada into Mexico. While consistency of the basic information would be highly beneficial and efficient, it is preferable that it be in electronic formats to enable information to move ahead of the actual vehicles and loads, to be available to customs officials prior to arrivals at border crossings. As experiments proceed in this field, it would be valuable to test such systems in the Mid-Continent International Trade Corridor, where there is particularly strong interest and support from the business community and shippers.

Recommendation

Continue the innovation in border crossing procedures, with Manitoba as a test case, and establish more joint projects with the US and Mexican governments to install compatible documentation systems in electronic formats wherever possible.

- 7.4 The timely movement of products across the Canada-US border has become a matter of particular concern in western Manitoba where the hog industry has grown rapidly. At the same time, the creation of high throughput elevators and the marketing of livestock and special crops is leading to increased use of the border crossing facilities in the area. Other agricultural product movements from Manitoba by rail and truck are also becoming more significant, including grain and specialty crops from Western Canada moving into the Mississippi river system. The availability of agricultural inspection capability from both countries at major border points is particularly beneficial, as is maintaining the current 24-hour ports and expanding hours at other locations wherever feasible.

Recommendation

Encourage the availability of agricultural inspection and ensure optimum hours of operation of select Manitoba-US border crossing facilities.

- 7.5 The importance of tourism has not received the attention it deserves in the plans for the corridor's development. There are measures involving tourism that should be taken in conjunction with the freight transportation and goods-processing aspects of the regional development underpinning the corridor concept. A refocus of the corridor issues should include the tourism elements, which are increasingly crucial for the region's economic growth and business development, particularly in northern Manitoba. Improvements in transportation, border operations and other corridor projects must be related to both people and products.

Recommendation

Establish a tourism marketing plan that emphasizes the features of the corridor and promotes tourist travel across the region.