

In 2020, Mexico and the United States will invest more than 61 million pesos to eradicate cotton boll weevil in the border area

With the contribution of both countries, 85 percent of the cotton-producing area in Mexico is free of the pink worm and the cotton boll weevil.



Sanitary authorities in Mexico and the United States agreed to continue with the Binational Program for the Eradication of Cotton Boll Weevil in the Rio Grande Valley Texas-North of Tamaulipas, for which the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will contribute 30 million pesos and the Mexican government 31 million more.

The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) managed resources before the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), with the objective of continuing with the actions carried out in the northern zone of Tamaulipas to eradicate this pest that affects cotton production.

During the follow-up meeting of the Binational Program, held by the chief director of the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA), Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, and the deputy administrator of the APHIS, Osama El-Lissy, it was made public that this joint program has allowed 85 percent of the cotton-producing area in Mexico to remain free of the pink worm (*Pectinophora gossypiella Saunders*) and of the cotton boll weevil (*Anthonomus grandis Boheman*).

The joint actions will benefit producers in Baja California, Coahuila, Durango, Chihuahua, Sonora and Tamaulipas, who in 2019 established 224 thousand hectares of this crop, Trujillo Arriaga explained.

The Agriculture official informed that during 2020 the Government of Mexico will invest about 31 million pesos to operate the Campaign against Regulated Pests of Cotton in the six entities that produce cotton in the national territory.

He informed that SENASICA has the necessary technology and organization to protect and maintain the areas of cotton free of pink worm and cotton boll weevil, and stressed the importance of teamwork to eradicate medium-sized cotton weevil in northern Tamaulipas and in the Lagunera region, in Coahuila and Durango.

He pointed out that the Agriculture Department considers the continuous training of its personnel a priority. It is for this reason both SENASICA and APHIS taught, in Coahuila, the "Simulation of the Emergency Plan against Cotton Boll Weevil in Clear Zones Workshop", in

which 31 technicians of the six states in which the Binational Program operates participated, along with managers and technical staff of USDA who attended as assistants and instructors.

The USDA official, Osama El-Lissy, described the Program as successful and explained to the attendees the importance of the control actions being carried out in time and in the proper way to be effective.

The general director of Plant Health, Francisco Ramírez y Ramírez, summoned the technicians of Mexico and the United States, the producers and the members of the Producer System to strengthen the field actions, to verify the results of the Binational Program and adapt the strategies to achieve the goal of eradication.

The coordinator of the Binational Program in the north zone of Tamaulipas, Carlos Campos Ruelas, informed that there are 7,874 hectares planted in the region, in which four thousand 419 traps have been installed during 2019, more than 138 thousand inspections have been carried out and 7 thousand insects have been captured, which reduced the presence of the pest by 83 percent, given that 53 thousand specimens were captured in 2018.

He noted that the declaration of the pink worm free zone is already in process, for which SENASICA technicians have already carried out three supervisions to verify the absence of the pest.

The program has been operating since about 20 years ago; time during which the federal government has invested more than 850 million pesos to rescue the production of Mexican cotton. Production, that in 2009 was equal to 279 thousand tons and in 2018 reached 1.163 million tons, with value equal to 14.5 billion pesos.

The average yield in Mexico is 1,800 kilograms of fiber per hectare, which places the country in sixth place in the world productivity ranking and in ninth as a producer.

From 2002 to 2019, two million hectares of cotton were cared for, in 2018, 239 thousand hectares were cared for, which represents the maximum area served through the Binational Program. In 2019, the technicians worked on 224 thousand hectares.

The main producing state is Chihuahua, which in 2018 planted 169 thousand 900 hectares, with which it obtained the fourth historical record in the last eight years.