

## **The United States gives recognition to Baja California as *Boophilus* spp. tick-free**

The measure allows producers to export live cattle with less restrictions.



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) gave recognition to Baja California as a *boophilus* spp. (*Rhipicephalus*) tick-free zone, which will allow bovine cattle producers to export live animals more easily.

The recognition was granted by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), following the request made in the first quarter of 2019 by the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA).

The US health agency conducted various analyzes and concluded that ruminants imported from the region represent a low risk for American cattle.

The APHIS establishes regulations on the importation of certain animals to prevent the introduction of cattle transmissible diseases.

The regulations establish the procedure to request recognition of the animal health status of a region or for the approval of the export of a particular type of animal or product to the US.

The APHIS evaluates the applications and, if it considers that the recognition can be granted, it submits its evaluation for public consultation –by means of a notice that is published in its Federal Register. Once the consultation is finished, the health authority reviews the comments and makes a final determination.

In the case of the declaration made for Baja California, the APHIS published the request of the agency of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER) last March 19<sup>th</sup>, and requested comments for a period of 60 days. Given that it did not receive any comments, it communicated to SENASICA its determination to add the entity to the list of regions of Mexico declared as free of ticks.

Baja California joins Sonora, which received the USDA recognition on March 30, 2015, and Chihuahua, which, with the exception of the municipalities of

Guadalupe y Calvo and Morelos, was recognized as *Boophilus* spp. tick-free on March 28, 2018.

The SENASICA, through the *Agreement establishing the National Campaign for the control of the Boophilus spp. tick*, seeks to eradicate the ectoparasite from areas where it is ecologically feasible. In addition, in order to avoid re-infestation of cleared areas, there are mechanisms in place to control the mobilization of livestock.

Currently, the states of Sonora, Tlaxcala, Aguascalientes, Baja California, northern Baja California Sur and Chihuahua (with the exception of the municipalities of Morelos y Guadalupe and Calvo) are recognized by SENASICA as free of the ectoparasite, which is equivalent to 30.6 percent of the national territory, with an area of almost 600 thousand square kilometers.

The municipalities of Los Cabos and the southern part of La Paz, Baja California Sur; Ahome, El Fuerte and Choix, on the right bank of the El Fuerte river in Sinaloa, and the city councils in the desert area of the state of Coahuila: Cuatrociénegas, Ocampo and Sierra Mojada, are in the eradication phase, covering more than 67 thousand square kilometers, equivalent to 3.44 percent of the national territory.

Serious infestations of *Boophilus* spp. in cattle produce severe economic losses due to the decrease in the daily weight gain of the animal, as well as a decrease in the production of milk and the deterioration of the skins. Sometimes, they may even be the cause of death of the animals because they are carriers of hemoparasitic diseases such as *anaplasmosis* and *piroplasmosis*.