

Central American locust

The Central American locust (*Schistocerca piceifrons* Walker) is an insect that feeds on up to 400 plant species. It has a high reproductive potential and a behavior tendency towards gregarization, that is, the formation of swarms and sleeves capable of covering from a few square meters to kilometers.

The sleeves have the ability to travel at a speed of up to 20 km/hour, reaching great distances in a short time. Such ability makes them a risk for the agricultural sector. In urban areas, control measures are difficult since its presence causes social problems because health of the civilian population must be safeguarded.

The origin of this pest dates back to the beginning of agriculture, where the oldest record is perhaps in the “*The Popol Vuh*”, the Mayan sacred book. In Mexico, the locust was declared a national pest since 1824, and provisions were established to fight it off.

The campaign is currently being carried out in Campeche, Chiapas, Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and Yucatán.

Through the actions of detection and timely control performed by the personnel of the *National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality* (SENASICA), the pest has not represented a risk of damage or economic losses. Such losses

could potentially represent up to 100 % of the crops of economic importance.