

# Mexico begins exporting bananas to China

Villalobos Arámbula presides over the departure ceremony of 39 tons of fruit; producers from Tabasco, Colima and Chiapas profit from the shipments.



Mexico is the twelfth banana producer worldwide, with 2.7 million tons per year. 30% of the production, worth about USD\$270 million, is exported to 43 countries.

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During the departure ceremony of the first shipment of Mexican bananas to China, Víctor Villalobos Arámbula, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development underlined that this new market is the result of the producers' preventive phytosanitary work, thus the Mexican government will continue their support to help incorporate an increasing number of farmers, especially small farmers.

He stated that our country is held in high regard internationally due to its work and experience in health and safety issues, which enabled opening a market as demanding as China, thus the Secretariat of Agriculture, through the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA) will monitor the exact and timely compliance with regulations to help increase the volume of exports.

The first export shipment consists of 39 tons of bananas. 20 tons of bananas come from a packaging company of Teapa, Tabasco, while another packaging company of Mazatán, Chiapas will ship 19 tons of the fruit.

The Secretary underlined that bananas are the fourth most important food in the world, only behind corn, beans and rice, and are main contributors to the food security of many countries and bring significant economic benefits for food producing areas.

Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, General Director of the SENASICA, stated that all orchards that will start exporting to China are free of pests and certified in good agricultural practices, therefore the Secretariat of Agriculture issued a certificate that is physically attached to the shipments and proves compliance with the conditions agreed upon between both governments.

José Ignacio Peralta Sánchez, governor of Colima, thanked the Secretariat of Agriculture and the SENASICA for the technical assistance provided to the producers in order to meet the

demands of international markets, and which provides the people of Colima with competitive advantages and higher incomes for their families.

Adrián Pratas Leal, President of the *Comité Sistema Producto Plátano* organization, highlighted that the opening of this new market contributes to make reality the mandate of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of fair and equitable treatment to all the country's producers, and in turn, farmers are responsible of increasing exports without neglecting the domestic market.

On May 13, 2019, the Secretariat of Agriculture and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) signed the phytosanitary requirements protocol to export fresh bananas from Mexico to China.

On December 16, 2019, the GACC published in their website the listing of authorized production sites and establishments to start banana imports from Colima, Chiapas and Tabasco.

The GACC authorized 37 production sites free of the moko disease of banana (22 in Chiapas, 14 in Colima and 1 in Tabasco), with an area of 4,767.28 hectares of banana trees (3,025 in Chiapas, 1,520 in Colima and 222 in Tabasco) and 49 packaging companies (17 in Colima, 4 in Tabasco and 28 in Chiapas).

According to *Sistema Producto Plátano*, our country ranks twelfth in banana production worldwide with 2.7 million tons per

year; 30% of the production goes to 43 markets, with an approximate worth of USD\$270 million.

Indira Vizcaíno Silva, state delegate for *Programas para el Desarrollo*, José Luis Nava Sánchez, Manzanillo's customs manager, Sergio Morales Anguiano, Secretary of Agriculture and Livestock Development of Colima, Ying Jun Shao, advisor of Economic and Commercial Affairs of the Chinese Embassy in Mexico and the President of the *Consejo Nacional Agropecuario* (Agriculture and Livestock National Board), among others, were also in attendance at the ceremony.

Villalobos Arámbula cuts the ribbon of the International Year of Plant Health celebrations.

- In 2020 Mexico joins the celebration of the International Year of Plant Health as declared by the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 2018.
- More than 55 agricultural, academic and scientific organizations are readying to join the celebration, together with 200 countries around the world.
- The objective is to raise social awareness about the importance of preventing plant pests and diseases.
- Plant health is essential for food production, thus it is an imperative condition to reach food self-sufficiency, a primary goal

of the Mexican government, and to achieve the zero hunger and end of poverty sustainable development goals established by the UN.

- This celebration is especially relevant for Mexico because it coincides with the 120 anniversary of the start of plant health activities in our country.
- Through 120 years, Mexican producers and agronomists have built a solid sanitary system that gives Mexico a high prestige as food producer and enables exports to over 160 countries, since we are free from 85% of the 1,200 known plant pests and diseases in the world.