

## **The Number of Producers Working under Food Safety Schemes Is Growing in Mexico.**

Globally, every year 600 million people fall ill from consuming contaminated food and 420 thousand die, hence the importance of implementing food safety systems in food production.



The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development informed that, as part of the food safety actions for domestic consumption and export, in 2020, 30,303 new production units were serviced and certified, of which 13,805 corresponded to agriculture, 8,25 to livestock and 8,473 to aquaculture and fisheries.

In the framework of Monday's celebration of World Food Safety Day 2021, it was reported that the number of producers in the country that implement food safety systems in food production to supply the domestic market and export their surpluses to a greater number of markets, improving their conditions and income, is annually increasing.

These certifications, issued by the National Service for Agro-alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (Senasica), include the application of programs such as Good Agricultural, Livestock and Aquaculture Practices and Good Use and Management of Pesticides, among others, which, scientifically endorsed, guarantee consumers that the food on their tables is free of contaminants, said the agency's Chief Director, Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga.

During a virtual forum organized by the University of Guadalajara (UdeG), the General Director of Agrifood, Aquaculture and Fisheries Safety, Amada Vélez Méndez, pointed out that in the last 18 years the Senasica has taken the lead in food safety, which directly benefits producers, consumers, and the environment.

Since international markets have become globalized, the possibility of importing and exporting products that may be contaminated with pathogens that could compromise human health has increased, therefore international standards are applied to domestic and imported products in Mexico so as to safeguard food safety, covering the production process, harvesting, packaging, storage and transportation, Méndez explained.

She indicated that as these are voluntary registration and permanency programs, the Senasica must work to promote the benefits that obtaining the certifications represents for producers, such as higher prices for their goods and their distribution in more demanding markets, such as national supermarkets

and access to the United States, Japan, China, Korea, and the European Union.

The Government of Mexico joins the celebration of World Food Safety Day 2021 to sensitize authorities, the private sector, civil society, and the general public on the need to strengthen efforts to prevent, manage and detect food contamination risks during the production, storage, transportation and consumption processes.

Since 2019, after the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 2018 proclaimed June 7 of each year as World Food Safety Day, and for the third edition of the commemoration, the Secretariat organizes events to raise awareness among the population.

Under this year's slogan "Safe food now for a healthy tomorrow", the Senasica recognizes the work of producers, transporters, storers, distributors, marketers, and consumers, who contribute to produce food free of physical and chemical agents and pathogenic microorganisms that could be harmful to health.

In an effort to maintain food safety, the Senasica promotes among primary producers and processing companies the adoption of systems aimed at ensuring production is carried out under optimal hygienic conditions.

To this end, it promotes the implementation of Contamination Risk Reduction Systems (CRRS) such as Good Production Practices (GPP), Good Handling or Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Risk Analysis and Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures (SSOP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

It also conducts monitoring and surveillance programs for agricultural, livestock and aquaculture products of both Mexican and foreign origin, with the objective of verifying in the laboratory the presence or absence of toxic residues in foodstuffs.

In 2021, Senasica's Food Safety Program covers the 32 states of the Republic, through actions applied by the Agriculture Ancillary Agencies for the implementation of Good Agricultural, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries Practices, including training, technical assistance, support for sampling and monitoring of contaminants.

Technicians from the Secretariat of Agriculture have certified and recognized 6,845 production and primary packaging units for plant, animal, aquaculture and fishery products.

They have also issued 615 certificates to small vessels in nine Mexican states (Campeche, Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Oaxaca, Querétaro, Veracruz and Tamaulipas) for the implementation of Good Aquaculture and Fishing Practices in the production and capture of various species, including octopus, scales, shrimp, trout, tilapia and bivalve mollusks.

Furthermore, the Senasica operates the Reliable Supplier program to raise awareness among producers, stockpilers and introducers to produce livestock free of prohibited substances, such as clenbuterol. In 2020, technicians monitored 262 fattening units in 22 states and monitored more than 1.4 million head of cattle.

The Federal Inspection Type (TIF) certification is granted to companies slaughtering, processing, preserving and processing meat, which are subject to permanent sanitary inspection by 893 veterinarians endorsed by the Senasica.

In Mexico there are 464 TIF establishments operating in 29 states; their products carry the Secretariat's seal, which guarantees that the food they sell is of optimum hygienic and sanitary quality and complies with national and international standards, enabling them to move products without restrictions and be eligible to export meat products.

Our country is worldwide ranked as the eleventh largest producer, and it is among the top 10 food exporters, because the national agri-food industry applies mechanisms to ensure food safety of its products.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 600 million people fall ill from consuming contaminated food and 420 thousand die each year, therefore this international day is an opportunity to strengthen efforts to reduce the risk of foodborne diseases and promote safe practices in production and processing processes of food we consume.