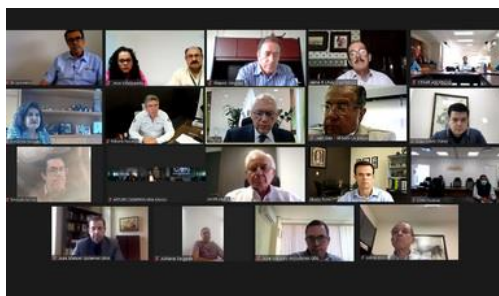


Agriculture and poultry farmers agree to reinforce campaign actions against avian influenza

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With the aim of eradicating low pathogenic avian influenza (H5N2) and high pathogenic avian influenza (H7N3), the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development and the poultry industry agreed on further measures within the national campaign, which will begin in the Jalisco production area.

Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, the head of the national service for Agro-alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA), accompanied by the heads of Animal Health within the organization, agreed with representatives of the state government of Jalisco and with producers on guidelines for strengthening sanitary actions.

The Agriculture Officer commented that avian influenza is a disease that poses great risks to national poultry farming, so it is the responsibility of the Government of Mexico to lead the actions that make it possible to eradicate it.

However, he emphasized, the National Campaign, which is operated by Agricultural Technicians, can only be successful with the active participation of the productive sector and state authorities, especially in Jalisco, an entity that produces 52.2 percent of the national egg and 11.2 percent of the poultry meat.

The federal official indicated that with this new epidemiological surveillance scheme, coupled with the strengthening of timely notification, poultry farmers will endorse the campaign, and will appreciate that timely information represents advantages for the industry.

The Director General of Animal Health of SENASICA, Juan Gay Gutiérrez, emphasized that the new work plan makes the changes to the campaign necessary to eradicate the disease, which entered our country in 1994.

He recalled that over time, in addition to the conditions of poultry farming, the invasion of ecological zones and the migration of wild birds from North America lead to the disease spreading to 21 locations, where it is contained under a mandatory vaccination scheme.

According to projections by the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), by 2050 countries must double their

current poultry production, and Mexico must make an effort to eradicate the main diseases that are causing their production to decline.

The director of the U.S.-Mexico Commission for the Prevention of foot-and-mouth disease and other animal exotic diseases at SENASICA, Roberto Navarro López, stressed that the new procedures are the culmination of years of work with poultry farmers.

The aim is to strengthen the actions fighting against this disease, which in 2012 led to an outbreak that claimed the lives of millions of birds in Altos de Jalisco, and put national poultry at risk.

He pointed out that nine years after this event, the virus has evolved, so the Agriculture Agency, together with the National Producer of Veterinary Biologicals (PRONABIVE, in Spanish) and specialized private laboratories, has assumed responsibility for providing poultry farmers with efficient vaccines.

He detailed that the beginning of the national strategy takes into consideration Los Altos de Jalisco, because of their high production, and that it is a region located between bodies of water used by migratory birds from the United States and Canada which, in many cases, are carrying the disease.

Navarro Lopez said that one of the most important actions of this new action plan is for official veterinary doctors to go to all the farms to obtain biological samples of flock birds as well as data on daily mortality rates. Such information must be provided by the production unit personnel in order not to violate the biosecurity measures.

He said that the first step was to form a new census of registered and unregistered farms with SENASICA, which will allow virological monitoring, in order to detect viral and serological loads, to locate the presence of antibodies in laying hens and poultry.

Also, the technicians of the Agriculture Agency will evaluate the biosecurity measures of the production units and monitor that the animals arriving at the end of the cycle are sent to Federal Inspection Type (TIF, in Spanish) slaughter establishments, for their proper processing in order to prevent the sale of live birds in irregular markets.

Another key point in the new strategy, he said, is that producers committed to thermal treatment of bird manure, known as chicken manure, in order to ensure the destruction of the virus, as set out in the Standard.

The action plan will begin in 16 municipalities in the Los Altos de Jalisco region: Encarnación de Díaz, Lagos de Moreno, Ojuelos de Jalisco, San Diego de Alejandría, San Juan de los Lagos, Teocaltiche, Unión de San Antonio, Acatic, Arandas, Cañadas de Obregón, Jalostotitlán, San Ignacio Cerro Gordo, San Miguel el Alto, Tepatitlán de Morelos, Valle de Guadalupe and Yahualica de González Gallo.

Around 70 poultry companies operate there, with an inventory of approximately 381 farms, of which 222 are commercial (egg producers), 55 are breeding, 13 are reproductive and 91 are fattening.

To carry out these animal health surveillance actions, a task force consisting of 15 technical specialists, six from the CPA, five from the Jalisco Health, Safety and Agro-alimentary Quality (ASICA, in Spanish) and four from the State Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Livestock.

The president of the National Union of Poultry Farmers (UNA), Juan Manuel Gutiérrez, assured that SENASICA has demonstrated with reliable evidence, to have the will to do things well and is committed to the health of the productive sectors, which has led to the opening of new national and international markets.

He indicated that the poultry farmers are pleased to move to this new scheme that will allow for more disease-free zones and, in the medium term, achieve the eradication of avian influenza throughout the country. Therefore, they will assist the authorities in achieving these objectives which are of common interest and benefit.

Also participating in the meeting were the Federal Liaison Director of the Jalisco government, Mauro Jiménez; the head of ASICA, Edgar Pulido; the executive president and the vice president of health of UNA, Arturo Calderón and Jaime Ruiz, respectively, the representative of Agriculture in Jalisco, Enrique Garcia, and representatives of the entity's poultry associations.