

**Coordinated work achieves the control and eradication of cotton
plant pests in the north part of the country: The Secretariat of
Agriculture**

Over the last 20 years, Mexican cotton producers stopped spraying over 667 metric tons of chemical products.

The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development pointed out that thanks to the commitment from producers and the efficient use of biotechnology supplied by the INIFAP (Mexican National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Livestock Research); the national campaign against regulated pests of cotton plants is one of their most successful in the area of plant health.

Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, director of the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality, was emphatic in saying that over the past 20 years, the control and eradication of pink bollworm and boll weevil in the northern states of the country has been “spectacular” and has made possible to declare most of the producing areas free of pests.

During his intervention in the virtual forum “Status of cotton in Mexico, challenges and opportunities”, the civil servant from the Secretariat of Agriculture pointed out that Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua,

Durango, and Coahuila are free of the pink bollworm, while Baja California, Chihuahua, and regions from Sonora and Coahuila are free of boll weevils.

On the other hand, regions of Sinaloa and Tamaulipas are under pink bollworm phytosanitary control, while some territories of Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas are free of boll weevils.

Mr. Trujillo Arriaga underscored the existence in those federated states of mandatory phytosanitary measures for producers, such as the removal of the residual shoots of the plants after the harvest and that could be food for the pests.

Moreover, at the event organized by the Proccyt (Crop Protection, Science and Technology Association), he mentioned that the uninterrupted joint work with the U.S. health authorities since 2002 allows the program to operate across borders and achieve successful results for producers of both countries.

Regarding the scientific contributions of the INIFAP, Mr. Trujillo Arriaga mentioned that the research from this institution of the Secretariat of Agriculture has made possible to move towards environmentally friendly biotechnologies, i.e., in the area of chemical products, producers have moved from over 25 pesticide applications per hectare, to less than 2 nowadays.

He also noted that in recent years the research that the Institute has produced for Mexican producers has assisted them in duplicating the

productivity and yield of cotton per hectare, which helps them be competitive against countries that seed larger areas.

Juan Cortina Gallardo, president of the CNA (National Board of Agriculture and Livestock) pointed out that cotton brings over 13 billion pesos in income for Mexican farmers and is one of the largest rural employers with over eight thousand people per season.

Further, he mentioned that the development of the sector must rely on science and technological innovation and have multiannual plans that provide certainty to one of the activities that boosted our country's growth towards the second half of the 20th century.

Cristian García de Paz, executive director of the Proccyt, commented that the work to make the crop sustainable started in 1997, when genetically modified varieties were introduced, and consequently the sector stopped spraying at least 667 metric tons of insecticide active ingredients to the environment.

He pointed out that, in the face of the competitiveness achieved by the main cotton producing countries through the use of science and technology, Mexico must keep betting in improved seeds, and new varieties resistant to climate change and pests and diseases.

Senator Nancy Sánchez Arredondo, Raúl Treviño Cisneros, president of the National Committee of Cotton System-Product, and Manuel Espinosa Maurer, president of the National Chamber of the Textile Industry were also in attendance.