

Buffalo Breeding is a Feasible Alternative to Meet the Demand for Both Meat and Milk in Mexico

Producers of this ruminant highlighted that buffalo breeding promotes sustainable practices, is economically more accessible, and the inputs and derivatives of this species have greater nutritional properties than those of bovine cattle



As an alternative to the demand for meat and milk in the country, livestock producers are seeking to promote buffalo breeding -which meat is economically more accessible, and to increase the buffalo herd in Mexico, informed the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development.

According to data from the Mexican Association of Buffalo Breeders (AMEXBU), there are currently more than 58,000 head of buffalo cattle in the country, with a presence in 29 of the 32 states.

The Association reported that the greatest increase of buffalo breeding has been registered in the Mexican Southeast, in states such as Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Oaxaca, and Veracruz, and recently in Nayarit, Jalisco, and Aguascalientes.

Through the National Service for Agro-alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (Senasica), with strict health and safety programs, the Secretariat of Agriculture provides certainty to buffalo breeding in Mexico.

The federal agency also stressed the importance of slaughtering buffalo cattle in Federal Inspection Type (TIF) slaughterhouses to ensure traceability and inspection.

According to the president of the Interinstitutional and Legislative Liaison Commission of the National Confederation of Livestock Organizations (CNOG), Ismael Coronel Sicairos, the development of buffalo farming is promising and an opportunity to promote careers focused on strengthening the sector, such as veterinary medicine, agricultural administration, gastronomy, and business, among others.

During the first half of 2022, Coronel Sicarios pointed out the sector is expected to be boosted in Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, with the delivery of 250 gestating females, which will contribute to the development of new genetics in herds in other states.

In addition, with the support of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development, state livestock associations, CNOG and the Individual Cattle Identification System (SINIIGA), a buffalo register and inventory is being carried out in Mexico.

Also, the president of AMEXBU emphasized that, with the supervision of the authorities, it has been possible to establish herds free of brucellosis, tuberculosis, and some other diseases.

Bubalinoculture with Greater Advantages for Beef Cattle

According to Alfonso de Vega, a veterinarian and cattle producer in Puebla, buffalo farming is organic, since the feed is based entirely on natural grass and, in order not to devastate the environment, the animals are rotated periodically, which contributes to more sustainable practices.

He emphasized that buffalo breeding is affordable, as the animals do not require great care, feed on pastures that are not suitable for bovines, and the species adapts easily to adverse climate and soil conditions.

Regarding production of inputs and derivatives, deVega indicated that buffalo milk has marked differences with respect to bovine milk, as it has a higher caloric value and a thicker texture.

With only five liters of milk, up to one kilogram of cheese can be produced, as opposed to bovine milk, which requires 10 liters to produce the same amount of cheese, he said.

He added that buffalo milk derivatives include fresh and matured cheeses, yogurt, dulce de leche and ice cream.

Moreover, buffalo meat has a lower fat content than that of beef: 40 percent less cholesterol, 55 percent fewer calories, 11 percent more protein and 10 percent more minerals, said Alfonso de Vega.

In 1991, under the management of A.P. Leonards, a U.S. researcher at the University of Florida, the Asian water buffalo arrived for the first time in Mexico and, since then, its breeding has increased to more than 50,000 head of cattle throughout the country.

This species has a gestation period of 281 to 334 days, its birth weight ranges from 35 to 45 kilograms approximately, and the weaning weight of 18-month-old males is 320 to 360 kilograms, and they can exceed 500 kilograms at maturity.