

Plant Health is Everyone's Endeavor: The Secretariat of Agriculture

The National Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality Service (Senasica) strives to strengthen its actions to keep the country free of major exotic pests and diseases and works to eradicate endemic ones.



As part of the commemoration of the National Plant Health Day on July 1, Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, chief director of the National Service for Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality (Senasica), called on the productive, industrial, and academic sectors as well as society in general, to assume their role as part of Mexico's plant health system, which allows healthy and safe food to reach our tables every day.

Plant health is the responsibility of all of us -consumers, producers, traders, educational institutions, technicians, and government. We all share responsibility and merit in the consolidated work that allows us to be one of the main vegetable producing and exporting countries in the world, said the Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, Victor Villalobos Arambula, on behalf of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Leading the protocol ceremony for the second edition of the National Plant Health Day, Trujillo Arriaga stressed that Mexico, in compliance with international regulations, has extended the concept of plant care, so that now, in addition to actions related to agronomy, environmental and economic aspects are included.

He assured that after celebrating the International Year of Plant Health in 2020 and now having a national and an international day has led to greater awareness on the subject, therefore Senasica is obliged to strengthen efforts to maintain the country's status as free of major exotic pests and diseases and works in the national territory to eradicate endemic ones.

Before representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), the Secretary of Agriculture pointed out that the region of the Americas continues to be a mosaic for compliance with the 43 international plant health

standards, which is why efforts must be unified to advance in standardizing actions.

IICA's representative in Mexico, Diego Montenegro Ernst, commented that Mexico is a respected player in global markets for its committed and efficient work on sanitary issues and that, for years, for years, it has been an example of how plant health care is the driving force behind the country's economic recovery since it generates the most foreign exchange and provides the main tools for fighting poverty.

OIRSA's representative in Mexico, Octavio Carranza de Mendoza, said that the organization, which for 68 years has included the Ministries of Agriculture of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, has been working permanently to support their sanitary agencies and production systems in establishing better sanitary programs aimed at providing greater protection to the region.

The Plant Health Attaché of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (APHIS-USDA), Jennifer Smythe, said joint technical collaboration between the two countries is essential for Mexican and U.S. consumers to have healthy and safe food at their fingertips.

Senasica's Director General of Plant Health, Francisco Ramirez y Ramirez, acknowledged the technical work carried out over the last 20 years in the Mexican countryside, which has resulted in key crops such as avocado, cotton and mango increasingly reporting areas certified as free of major pests such as borers, weevils, and fruit flies.

Luis Angel Rodriguez del Bosque, Head of the Office of Corresponding Affairs of the General Directorate of the National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Livestock Research (INIFAP), said that research related to health issues is a priority for the organization founded more than 35 years ago, as it contributes to offer better food to the country's consumers.

The general director of the Colegio de Postgraduados (Colpos), Juan Antonio Villanueva Jiménez, indicated that the institution works to train the best phytosanitary professionals, to provide producers with the best technical and scientific tools to harvest healthy and safe food for the population.

On behalf of the president of the National Agricultural Council (CNA), the vice president of Agro-alimentary Health and Safety, Mario Puente Raya, said that the dissemination of plant health is an issue of national importance, so he pledged that the organized industry would give greater visibility to the actions of Senasica and thus contribute to achieving food security.

Eduardo Castillejos, president of the Export Mango Packers (EMEX) and part of the productive sector, commented that because of phytosanitary actions, Mexican mangoes are well positioned in the best markets in the world, generating income of more than 600 million dollars a year.

Celebrating Plant Health

As part of the celebration of National Plant Health Day, from June 27 to 30, Senasica transmitted, through its digital platforms, a series of conferences delivered by experts and specialists, to inform about the actions carried out in the country to preserve Mexico's phytosanitary status.

Moreover, the Secretariat of Agriculture and the Metro Collective Transportation System (STC) inaugurated the exhibition "Plant Health in Everyday Life" at the Jamaica station, through which more than four thousand daily users are informed about the importance of plant health in food.

Likewise, from June 26 to July 3, some of Mexico City's emblematic buildings will be illuminated in green, including the Legislature, the Chapultepec Aqueduct, the monument to Álvaro Obregón and the Gran Hotel de la CDMX.