

The states are strategic allies in the protection of food production in Mexico: Secretariat of Agriculture

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The collaboration and commitment from the country's state governments and producers are strategic to the success of the works carried out by the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development to prevent the introduction and spread of pests and diseases that could endanger food production.

The federal agency pointed out that, through the National Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA), plant and animal health programs are in operation throughout the 32 federated states to prevent, control, and eradicate pests and diseases, like avian influenza or the Mediterranean fly, tasks in which neither the state authorities, nor producers, could be successful on their own.

These actions aim to protect the national food supply, the revenue of currency, and the patrimony of producers and rural communities, since their work creates jobs and development, and contributes to the goal of food security. Consequently, the SENASICA is recognized as a national security agency.

Francisco Javier Trujillo Arriaga, general director of the SENASICA, called the state governments to join as strategic allies of the health authority, and work together with the plant and animal health technicians, in the operation of measures to prevent and control threats that could endanger food production in our country.

The director pointed out that Mexico has a solid legal framework that privileges the importance of sanitation as a public asset over national or foreign private interests, thus the actions carried out by the SENASICA are the acts of authorities.

The SENASICA has a first-class infrastructure, comparable to world powers on the subject, such as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, which makes possible to stop the introduction of pests and diseases of economic relevance, in the context of commercial trade with over 100 countries.

The federal official recalled that technicians systematically search for pest and diseases not currently present in Mexico (but present in other regions), and in the event of detection, act as authority to establish immediate counter-epidemic measures, to prevent the spreading and settlement of any such pests and diseases in our country.

For example, if a ship carrying 20,000 metric tons of cereals arrives to Mexico, and the Kaphra beetle is detected aboard, the ship and its cargo must return to their place of origin for being a risk that is unbearable for the country. "This pest is absent in Mexico, and the establishment thereof would cause the loss of the ability to store and export grains".

Mr. Trujillo Arriaga pointed out that the preventive plant health actions carried out by the SENASICA's specialists are valued around the world, through the recognition of free areas that enable farmers to place their goods in the best markets, at prices that help raise their quality of life, create jobs, and boost the development of communities.

Mr. Trujillo Arriaga recalled the avocado producers of Jalisco, which have been exporting 1,300 metric tons of fruit per week to the United States, as the most recent success case, made possible by the protocol executed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

On animal health matters, Mexico is a national example on prevention against world threats such as the foot-and-mouth disease, and the African swine fever (ASF), which have devastated the livestock assets of countries throughout the five continents.