Rosseta, the Dog that Takes Care of Mexico

After losing an eye after a stroke, the canine sniffs more than 100 suitcases in just 10 minutes at airports, ports, and borders.

Rosseta has completed its three months of training and is already *monitoring airports, ports, and borders* to prevent the entry of **quarantine** or exotic **diseases** that put **Mexico'**s **agricultural heritage at risk**.

This mix-breed dog is only two years old, and since last January is part of the team of "**Canine Units**" of the **Canine School of the National Service of Health, Safety and Agro-alimentary Quality** (**Senasica**), to serve her country.

Rosseta has shown a great aptitude for handling *more than 100 bags on an international flight every 10 minutes*, as opposed to the 60 minutes it might take an inspector to open and check each bag.

Ricardo Reyes Balvanera, specialist of the **Clinical, Preventive Medical and Surgical Area of the Canine School**, said that Rosseta was first rescued from a shelter in Pachuca, Hidalgo. She *was apparently beaten with a machete or stick, and lost her left eye.*

"When we rescued her, the dog still had her eye, but it was no longer working. Here the eye was enucleated and, despite this, Rosetta can work as we are looking for is the sense of smell, not for the sight," he commented in an interview with Notimex.

"Rosseta doesn't care that she doesn't have an eye. She is just as efficient as any other dog... and now she is providing her services to Mexico" in the detection of products regulated by the **Secretariat of**

Agriculture and Rural Development (**Sader**) to prevent the entry of diseases such as **foot-and-mouth disease** or **African swine fever**, among others.

The risk of these pests will always exist because the number of people arriving in the country every day is enormous and, *although their work is "not widely known or acknowledged", it is relevant for the health and safety of agricultural products.*

The veterinarian explained that Rosseta, along with **Jacko**, **Quiko,** and 23 other dogs from the school located in the municipality of **Tecámac**, **State of Mexico**, *are trained to detect five basic scents: citrus, mango, apple, pork and beef, as* they are the most common products brought by those arriving at ports, airports, and borders.

All these dogs have been selected because they have something in common: they are friendly, playful, and have a sweet tooth. *"A dog must be happy to be able to work,"* he remarked.

Verónica Montes Trejo, a veterinarian, agreed that Rosseta is ready to follow in the footsteps of Jacko, a Belgian shepherd who has been working on the **borders of Chiapas** and **Baja California**, and will now be tasked with checking every suitcase arriving at **Mexico City's Benito Juárez International Airport** (**AICM**).

"Dogs have a lot of fun there, because for them it's a game (sniffing the luggage of foreign visitors)," the training expert emphasized.

He is confident that Rosseta will become as experienced as the Belgian shepherd, as Rosetta can detect the scents of any type of bird, and even the feathers, hunting trophies, seeds, and grains.

Canine's work not only leads them to receive food as a reward for each suitcase detected, but also implies the country can strengthen Mexicans' **health security**.

Senasica's Canine School began operating in 2007, with the acquisition of 12 canines, and today *has 103 elements available to work with 110 handlers at the various entrance and exit points of the country.* Today they work in 27 states and set the bar to train other dogs in **Guatemala**, **Panama,** and **Nicaragua**. Just in *2018 they marked 215,210 pieces of luggage, of which 119,364 contained products for which they were trained to detect.*