

# **Secretariat of Agriculture lifts off quarantine on Sonora poultry farming, maintains restrictions only in Yucatán**

Technicians from the National Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality Service (Senasica) demonstrated the absence of the virus through 916 official investigations in 17 municipalities of Sonora, in which 18,200 samples were collected



The Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development lifted the internal quarantine that was issued on November 3 for poultry farming in Sonora, after verifying that the highly pathogenic AH5N1 avian influenza virus was no longer present in the region.

The quarantine lifted in Sonora is the third one authorized by General Directorate of Animal Health (DGSA) of the National Agro-Alimentary Public Health, Safety and Quality Service (Senasica) since the HPAI A(H5N1) virus was first detected in Mexico, in mid-October 2022.

On November 23 of last year, these restrictive measures were lifted in Nuevo León and on January 4, 2023, these were lifted in Jalisco. Therefore, only poultry farming in Yucatán is currently under in internal quarantine.

In Sonora, it was possible to contain the virus in six poultry production units (UPA), which were depopulated, washed and disinfected, and it was verified through laboratory tests that the virus was no longer present at this stage.

Senasica reported that the last positive case of HPAI A(H5N1) in Sonora was detected on December 16, 2022. Therefore, after no new infections were detected for more than three incubation periods of the virus—a period established to guarantee the absence of the disease—it was decided to lift the quarantine.

For 10 weeks, DGSA—through specialists of State Emergency Group for Animal Health in Sonora (GEESA-Sonora) of the National Emergency Animal Health Device (Dinesa)—conducted in epidemiological investigation in 17 municipalities of this state, including: Álamos, Bacum, Cajeme, Etchojoa, Guaymas, Hermosillo, Navojoa, Quiriego, Rosario and Ures.

During this internal quarantine period, members of GEESA, commanded by specialists of Senasica's Mexico-United States Commission for Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other Exotic Diseases An animals (CPA), conducted 916 official investigations, in which 18,200 samples were collected from wild birds, commercial farms and backyard productions, which were analyzed in official laboratories.

The Agriculture agency recalled that internal quarantine implies that Animal Health personnel must restrict the movement of birds, their products and residues (excreta, known as chicken manure).

During the quarantine, Senasica must have negative RT-PCR tests for the virus to authorize the movement and commercialization of eggs and live birds, in order to prevent the spread of the virus and protect consumers.

To organize the emergency operation, Senasica has the Health Emergency Operations Center (COES) which, under Dinesa, is operated by GEESA-Sonora and federal authorities of the

Secretariat of Agriculture, Senasica and state government, as well as poultry producers, under CPA Coordination of the state.

Regarding the emergency vaccination strategy against A(H5N1) avian influenza, Senasica has authorized the application of more than 140 million doses of the biological in commercial production units nationwide, in areas of high animal health risk and on farms where there are egg-laying and breeders.

From this total, around 22 million doses were destined for Sonora's UPAs.

It should be stressed that DGSA of Senasica intends to maintain strategic vaccination only until the end of the winter season (at the end of March), in order to prevent the disease from establishing in Mexico, which would imply losing the status of a free country. from HPAI A(H5N1).

DGSA emphasized that emergency vaccination is a complementary tool, considered by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), which is being applied together with biosecurity and control programs that must be implemented in production units, such as cleaning, disinfection and sanitary vacuuming, in addition to thermal treatment of bird excreta, since this risk is permanent due to the migration of wild birds.

As of this date, HPAI A(H5N1) has affected a total of 5.6 million birds in Mexico; most of them egg-laying birds—0.27% of

domestic inventory—in 29 commercial poultry production units in four entities: one in Nuevo León, seven in Jalisco, 15 in Yucatán and six in Sonora, the latter with just over 744,000 affected birds.