

The Secretariat of Agriculture recognizes the work of veterinarians in ensuring the supply of healthy and safe foods

Supported by veterinary professionals, the National Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) operates programs in benefit of producers in general and small producers in particular



In the words of Francisco Javier Calderón Elizalde, general director of the National Agro-Alimentary Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA), sanitation is a public asset that impacts all society, and is essential for having enough safe and healthy foods for over 126 million people.

The official of the Secretariat of Agriculture and Rural Development explained that the actions of the SENASICA have strategic relevance whenever a sanitary issue can endanger the resources of all producers (particularly small and medium scale producers), deplete the availability of food stuffs, and alter the price of products of the basic food basket, which impacts our national food security and economy.

During his participation at the 2023 National Convention of the FedMVZ (Federación de Colegios y Asociaciones de Médicos Veterinarios Zootecnistas de México, A. C.) in Mérida Yucatán, he expounded that the veterinary professionals are a reference of organization and strength, and they are recognized as a strategic backbone for the development and protection of the national livestock industry.

Acting on behalf of Víctor Villalobos Arámbula, secretary of Agriculture, he highlighted the work carried out by nearly five thousand veterinarians under authorization of the SENASICA, who provide support to protect the health of livestock and increase their productivity and competitiveness, all in benefit of the country's livestock producers.

He also reported that the procedure of review and updating of the SIMA (Animal Identification and Mobilization System) is almost complete. Such system will operate under the direction of the SENASICA and will make possible to have an organized tool to supervise, assess, and audit the traceability of the country's bovine cattle and apiculture.

Calderón Elizalde invited producers, consumers, and commercial partners, to join the efforts carried out by the Secretariat of Agricultural to produce a reliable and transparent traceability system that will provide them assurances.

During his lecture "The Impact of Animal Health on the National Economy", he stressed that SENASICA's actions are a public asset, because in most cases and, above all, have to deal with the most devastating diseases that require a collective intervention, led by the federal government, because any individual effort to face them would not be enough.

In this way, he said, by intervening in the fight against pests and diseases, the agency of the Secretariat of Agriculture also protects the resources of producers, especially small and medium-scale producers, who would not have the possibility of addressing them on their own.

He also recalled that currently the agency's General Directorate of Animal Health (DGSA) faces the major challenge of the incursion of the highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1),

carried here by migratory birds from the United States and Canada.

These diseases affected over 59 million birds in the United States (43 million were egg-laying birds) which impacted the availability of poultry products for American consumers and caused the price of eggs to rise by over 160%.

On the contrary, thanks to the coordinated work of the Secretariat of Agriculture, veterinarians, state governments and producers, in the span of four months there have not been any active outbreaks of HPAI A(H5N1) threatening the national poultry production.

The federal official explained that the higher prices for poultry products (meat and eggs) is connected with the rise of international prices of inputs to produce livestock feed, like soy (67.5%) and corn (86.6%), when compared with the 2018/2019 cycle.

Mr. Arturo Sánchez Mejorada Porras, president of the FedMVZ, stated that across 170 years of existence, the profession has faced the gravest challenges in order to protect animal health and thus guarantee the supply of healthy and safe proteins for all people.

To fulfill this commitment, the organization provides update courses for its members in subjects such as One Health, good livestock practices, antimicrobial resistance and animal

wellbeing, and permanent training for authorized veterinarians in charge that assist the SENASICA in their daily activities.

Mr. Juan Gay Gutiérrez, SENASICA's general director of Animal Health pointed out the fact that, thanks to the work of its veterinarians, Mexico is recognized by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) among the top seven countries in sanitary status since it's free of foot-and-mouth disease, African horse sickness, *peste des petits ruminants*, classical swine fever, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and African swine fever (ASF).

Mr. Roberto Navarro López, director of the Mexico-United States Commission for Prevention of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other Animal Exotic Diseases (CPA), informed that the official personnel address any suspected occurrence of an exotic disease (such as the ASF) across 19,000 contact points distributed throughout our national territory, by sampling diseased or dead animals for analysis in high security laboratories of the agency, and getting results in less than 24 hours.

Mr. Jesús Gutiérrez García, director of Federal Inspection Type (TIF) establishments, recalled that the Secretariat of Agriculture has 74 years of history recognizing the health and safety standards of the Mexican slaughter and meat processing companies, and that currently there are 458 TIF facilities in operation across 28 states.

The event was attended by the general coordinator of Livestock, Arturo Macosay Córdova, and the presidents of the Conasa (the National Advisory and Technical Board on Animal Health), José de Jesús Palafox Uribe, of the AMEG (the Mexican Beef Producers' Association), Héctor Garza Garza, and of the CNOG (the Mexican National Confederation of Stock Breeders' Organizations), Homero García de la Llata.

Also in attendance, the leaders of Opormex (Mexican Pig Farmers' Organization) Heriberto Hernández Cárdenas, and the Veterinary Sciences Panamerican Association, Francisco Suárez Güernez, the general director of Comecarne (Mexican Meat Concil), Macarena Hernández Márquez, the former president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), José Arce, and the board member of the World Veterinary Association (WVA), Helio Blume, among other personalities.