

9-8-2004

Agriculture Secretariat Projects Record Corn Production

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Agriculture Secretariat Projects Record Corn Production." (2004). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4779>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Agriculture Secretariat Projects Record Corn Production

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 2004-09-08

Mexican agriculture authorities are forecasting record corn production of 22 million metric tons for the 2003-2004 crop year. Agriculture Secretary Javier Usabiaga released the estimate during a July conference of corn producers, processors, transport companies, and others involved in the corn industry. The estimated crop for the year would surpass 20.2 million MT produced in 2002-2003 and 19.3 million MT the previous year, Usabiaga said.

The agriculture secretary attempted to dispel recent suggestions that President Vicente Fox's administration is seeking to de-emphasize corn production, which has become less competitive against US imports. Mexico has steadily increased imports from the US because of domestic shortfalls, caused by drought (see SourceMex, 1998-09-02, 2000-01-19, 2001-06-07).

Usabiaga reassured conference participants that President Fox's administration is seeking to continue to boost corn production in coming years. "We are making every effort for corn to become competitive and profitable for producers," Usabiaga said.

Some Mexican government entities such as the foodstuffs agency Leche Industrializada Conasupo (LICONSA) have pledged to end all imports of commodities by next year to support the domestic agriculture economy. "As of 2005, LICONSA will no longer import corn, beans, coffee, lentils, and rice," said Social Development Secretary Josefina Vazquez Mota. "This way we can support our domestic producers."

Mexico is fighting the clock to help its producers become more viable, with all duties on corn imports set to be eliminated in 2008. Even with increased production, Mexico is encountering a reduction in consumption of the grain, partly the result of lower domestic demand for tortillas (see SourceMex, 2004-06-03).

The elimination of duties on corn is not the only concern. Some organizations have come up with evidence that an increasing amount of the corn entering the country is a genetically modified variety, which could cause irreparable harm to Mexico's native varieties (see SourceMex, 2000-04-05 and 2004-03-17).

In a recent report, the environmental organization Greenpeace Mexico denounced the government as an accomplice in the imports of genetically modified produce. The organization, an affiliate of Greenpeace International, accused the Secretaria de Salud (SSA) of issuing permits as far back as 1995 to allow imports of genetically modified produce.

The SSA not only allowed modified corn to enter the country, but also canola, tomatoes, cotton, soybeans, potatoes, and other crops, said the report. "I find it incredible that the government has allowed us to consume genetically modified products for nine years," said Areli Carreon,

coordinator of Greenpeace's campaign to ban genetically modified produce from Mexico. (Sources: La Cronica de Hoy, 07/21/04, Notimex, 07/20/04, 08/30/04; Unomasuno, 08/30/04, La Jornada, 08/27/04, 09/01/04)

-- End --