

Mexico's cotton production could 'disappear' in 2021 with GM, insect-resistant Bt seed banned

Cotton cultivation in Mexico could disappear next year, given the prohibition of SEMARNAT to use transgenic seed, warned the National Committee on Cotton Product System. The urgency for new genetically modified (GM) seeds of better quality for the next planting cycle led the organization to request a hearing from the Presidency to expose the problem.

"To go back to planting conventional cotton, to begin with, there are no seeds and it is not economically profitable, we are talking then that we are in danger that our crop will disappear by not having the seeds (GM) in the short term, starting in 2021" said Raúl Treviño, president of the Committee.

The transgenic seeds improve characteristics of the fiber such as length and resistance, he explained. The vast majority of the more than 7,000 cotton producers, located mainly to the north, will have to migrate to other crops such as sorghum or corn.

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"Cotton with Creole seed would not be profitable for us because it is very expensive to combat weeds. We use more chemicals and require more [labor]. You could consider changing the crop, but that is not so simple due to the characteristics of the land," said Franz Klassen Guenter, a cotton producer from Chihuahua.

From producing 1,566,000 bales in 2019, they will be reduced just over 500,000 this year, which implies a loss of 3.7 billion pesos.

[Editor's note: This article was originally published in Spanish and has been translated and edited for clarity.]

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