

Argentina: New technique against the fruit fly in blueberries

Argentina will implement the Sterile Insect Technique, which contemplates demonstration releases of sterile insects that do not generate offspring once they mate with wild females, thus eventually eradicating the fruit fly in the area.

The National Service for Agricultural Food Health and Quality (SENASA), through the National Program for the Control and Eradication of Fruit Fly of Northeastern Argentina (PROCEN NEA), and the Association of Blueberry Producers of the Mesopotamia Argentina (APAMA) made the first releases of male sterile flies for the control of *Ceratitis capitata*, better known as the Mediterranean Fly, in the province of Entre Rios.

The goal of these demonstration releases is to encourage and train the technical staff of the Program and of APAMA, as well as the productive sector, and the citizens of the area in the handling of this biological material, how to release it in the fields, and the advantages of the sterile insect technique (TIE).

These actions, which will be accompanied by a communication plan at the regional and national level, are carried out so that the region's productive establishments incorporate this control tool to their integrated pest management.

The sterile pupae and part of the necessary inputs to achieve their emergence and transformation into adult insects were provided by the Santa Rosa Sterile Insect Production Biofactory, under the Institute of Agricultural Health and Quality of Mendoza (ISCAMEN).

This week, the staff of the Program's laboratory, which is located in the town of Chajari, is receiving training on biological material preparation protocols and quality tests before proceeding to its release in the blueberry production farms of Berries del Sol and Arandeira, in the Department of Concordia.

The agency will continue to make releases and analyze the information generated in these pilot tests in the remainder of the production season.

The Sterile Insect Technique is a method of biological control that is friendly to the environment. It consists of the release of thousands of sterile males that do not generate offspring, which interrupts the life cycle of this species.

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