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Situation Update--Coffee Rust in Mexico

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Coffee

Pest/Disease Occurrences

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Report Highlights:

There is an outbreak of coffee rust affecting plantations in Mexico and Central America. The government of Mexico, through the Secretariat of Agriculture (SAGARPA), has launched an emergency program to mitigate coffee rust in designated coffee producing states. However, officials indicate that coffee production for MY 2012/13 is not at risk as most Mexican 2012/13 coffee has been harvested. 2013/14 production is expected to suffer but an estimate of the impact on production cannot yet be made. The main producer states are Chiapas, Veracruz, Puebla and Oaxaca, where Chiapas is the state with the most important production of organic coffee.

BACKGROUND

The advance of coffee rust (known locally as Roya) through Central America, Honduras, Panama, and Guatemala, began about two years ago before it reached the area of Chiapas in southern Mexico. In 2012 or so, evidence of the resurgence of this disease was found in Chiapas and the Secretariat of Agriculture (SAGARPA) instructed the National Service of Health, Food Safety, and Food Quality (SENASICA) and the Mexican Coffee Association (AMECAFE) to establish strategies to help prevent the spread of coffee rust. In October 2012 an Emergency Program was established in Chiapas to address the problem. There was a sampling campaign, training and communication events as well as a fungicide program in coffee plantations located at the border region with Guatemala. It is believed that coffee rust has had a low level prevalence in coffee regions in Mexico for several years.

According to several reports, the current outbreak of coffee rust is causing serious loss in Mexico and Central American coffee plantations. In Mexico, the Secretariat of Agriculture (SAGARPA) confirmed outbreaks in the States of Chiapas and Veracruz, two of the main coffee producer states.

Coffee in Mexico is produced under the shade of trees or in full sun. According to some growers, shade-grown coffee requires the filtering effect of shade trees to protect their leaves and is often cultivated on small farms using traditional techniques. Among the many benefits of using shade-grown coffee production methods, are that it requires less costly inputs and provides food and shelter for songbirds and numerous other species of animals and plants. In shade plantations, dead leaves from the trees provide organic wastes and nutrients to the coffee. Organic coffee is produced this way. Overall production, however, is typically significantly less than maximum tree yield potential under full sun cultivation.

Sun coffee varieties perform a very different function. Although sun coffees result in substantially increased yields, producing as much as three times more coffee than shade grown, they often require the addition of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides. The lack of tree root structures in the soil of sun coffee plantations can cause increased erosion.

COFFEE RUST DEVELOPMENTS

In response to the coffee rust outbreaks SAGARPA launched, in the city of Tuxtla in Chiapas, an emergency [inter-institutional program](#) on January 28, 2013, to combat coffee rust disease. SENASICA, along with AMECAFE and the Integrated Coffee Production Chain (Sistema Producto Café), will collaborate to strengthen joint research, training, technical assistance and dissemination of information to all sectors involved in the coffee production chain at the federal, state and municipal levels. The Plant Health General Director of SENASICA said the preventive campaign to contain the outbreak will focus on coffee producing states, mainly in Chiapas, Veracruz, Puebla and Oaxaca, even if the outbreak is not as severe as in Central America. AMECAFE still estimates coffee production to be about 4.3 million 60/ kilogram bags of green coffee equivalent (GCE) for MY 2012/2013 (Oct/Sept), higher than the 4.16 million 60/ kilogram bags in MY 2011/12.

In the state of Chiapas, SAGARPA ordered the deployment of a series of actions that includes the application of fungicides in plantations located in the border area. Orange rust was detected in coffee plantations in the municipalities of Chicomuselo, Siltepec, La Grandesa, El Porvenir, Motozintla,

Mazapa de Madero, Bellavista, Amatenango, Frontera Comalapa and Tapachula. Chiapas is the state with the most important production of shade-grown organic coffee, which places Mexico among the top global producers of this specialized type of coffee.

According to SENASICA’s State Plant Health officials, the lack of proper management in pruning and renewal in plantations were negative factors that increased propagation of the fungus that is now present in 100,000 hectares of about 250,000 hectares of coffee in Chiapas. However, officials indicate that coffee production in the 2012/13 cycle is not all at risk since large part of the harvest has already been picked, though quality could be affected. But, coffee production for MY 2013/14 will be affected as lower yields are expected. Production will also depend on the effectiveness of the campaigns to combat the coffee rust.

In the state of Veracruz, SAGARPA and State Plant Health authorities indicate that there is a presence of coffee rust in 16,000 hectares in different growing areas of the state, with 10,000 hectares presenting moderate to severe damage. The area of Cordoba, located 850 meters above sea level, has a total of 3,200 hectares planted with coffee, of which 2,000 hectares are already contaminated. In Cuichapa, 100 percent of its 900 hectares have rust. Other strong outbreaks have been identified in Yecuatla, Atzalan, Misantla, and Huatusco. Authorities launched the National Campaign Against Coffee Rust in the city of Xalapa, immediately allocating \$3 million pesos (\$230,770 USD) worth of fungicides. The coffee area in Veracruz is about 157,000 hectares, of which 90,000 hectares are above 800 meters above sea level, with the remainder below 800 meters, an altitude under which coffee is more vulnerable to this disease.

The Veracruz state president of the Integrated Coffee Production Chain said plantations affected by coffee rust might require renewal, especially the ones located under 800 meters. He added that the pest becomes more aggressive for growers that abandon the natural shade technique in favor of total sun and that other factors, such as climate, water, and erosion issues impact aggressively.

Mexico – Coffee Production 2011/12 (Oct/Sept)				
Selected States				
STATE	Area Planted (Has)	Area Harvested (Has)	Production (MT) not processed	Production (60 Kg/bag) GCE*
Chiapas	256,666	253,062	532,566	1,634,090
Veracruz	146,500	139,464	364,846	1,119,469
Oaxaca	163,380	148,955	141,505	434,184
Puebla	78,162	58,917	202,610	621,675
Others	125,078	324,405	116,781	359,956
TOTAL	769,786	724,803	1,358,840	4,169,374
Source: SIAP/SAGARPA				
*GCE: Green Coffee equivalent				

For More Information

FAS/Mexico Web Site: We are available at www.mexico-usda.com or visit the FAS headquarters'

home page at www.fas.usda.gov for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.

FAS/Mexico YouTube Channel: Catch the latest videos of FAS Mexico at work
<http://www.youtube.com/user/ATOMexicoCity>

Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS/Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX2029	Coffee Annual Report	05/14/2012
MX 1039	Coffee Annual Report	09/10/2011
MX1027	Coffee in 40 Gram Containers Allowed Duty Free	03/28/2011

Useful Mexican Web Sites: Mexico's equivalent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at www.sagarpa.gob.mx, the equivalent of the U.S. Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at www.economia.gob.mx, and the equivalent of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (SALUD) can be found at www.salud.gob.mx. These web sites are mentioned for the reader's convenience but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with, the information contained on the mentioned sites.