

MINUTES OF THE MEETING TO ESTABLISH THE CONTROLLED BURNING OF ASPARAGUS PROGRAM FOR THE CABORCA REGION, 2015–2016 SEASON

This meeting was held at the Mayor's office, located at Calle Obregón and Avenida Quiroz y Mora, in the city of Caborca, Sonora, at 7:00 p.m. on 24 November 2015. It was attended by Karina García Gutiérrez, Mayor of the Municipality of Caborca; Ricardo Araiza Celaya and Librada Macías González, respectively Municipal Secretary and City Councillor; Dr. Luis Alberto Cádiz Lizárraga, Director, Public Health Jurisdiction no. 2; José Ramsés Ortega Celaya, Director, CADER 02 Caborca, representing Sindia Anel Gutiérrez Saldaña, director of DDR 139 Caborca; Fabián Robles Contreras, Field Director, Inifap; Enrique Ricardo Gil Mejía and Carlos Alberto Nicols Santos, respectively President and Executive Director of the Asociación Agrícola de Productores de Frutas y Hortalizas de Caborca A.C.; Aarón Mier Nogales and Alfonso Reyes Pesqueira, from the Asparagus Commission of the same organization; Eduardo Liñeiro Celaya, President, Local Phytosanitary Committee; and Raul H. Buentello Ruiz, President, Asociación de Usuarios del Distrito de Riego 037, Altar, Pitiquito, Caborca, A.C.

Mr. Nicols Santos opened the meeting, commenting that the controlled asparagus burning program is to be implemented for the sixth consecutive year, with reference to **NOM 015-Semarnat-Sagarpa-2007**.

Mr. Gil Mejía stated that the asparagus growers agree and are willing to observe strict compliance with the control program proposed by the Local Phytosanitary Committee, which sets out stricter standards with a view to substantially diminishing the effects of the controlled burning of asparagus. These rules are enumerated below.

1. Facilitating the work of the Local Phytosanitary Committee staff.
2. Burning a daily maximum of 3.5% of the total area; i.e., if we have 9,000 ha in the whole region, 315 ha may be burned each day.
3. We believe that this can be achieved with proper planning at the time the asparagus plants are cut down.
4. The Sapos-La Almita regions are the most critical, so the three companies operating there (Las Tres Californias, Hortícola del Desierto, and Exportadora de Caborca) must not all burn on the same day.
5. The burning schedule is from **11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** even if conditions are favorable later in the day.
6. Banking of unused allotted areas for later burning is not permitted, nor is extra burning in anticipation of rainy weather.
7. Growers must submit their burning plans no later than November 30, which will enable us to analyze the various plans and make any necessary adjustments.
8. Payment of 300 pesos per ha on the basis of actual area and short-term recovery.
9. Fines for growers who violate any of these conditions.
10. The Municipal Council is in charge of setting the amounts of fines and collecting them.
11. There will be follow-up to fines as necessary.
12. We are not liable for any consequences resulting from failure to comply with the program.
13. The roles of each of the parties involved in the asparagus burning process must be made very clear and must be made known to all relevant parties.
14. All growers must sign a document stating their agreement with the request of the Local Phytosanitary Committee, and they undertake to comply with all of the points mentioned.

15. In the event that a grower causes an anomaly and is fined accordingly, but the fine is not collected, the Local Phytosanitary Committee will resign from coordination of the program.

Mr. Liñeiro Celaya made some general comments about previous years' results of the controlled burning of asparagus program, specifically regarding wind speed and direction and the optimal schedule for this practice.

Mr. Robles Contreras commented that Manuel de Jesús Valenzuela Ruiz had conducted a study for Inifap analyzing the effect of asparagus foliage burning at harvest time on yield. The study found that in the absence of burning, the harvest began six days late and production was poor. This caused a shift in the marketing window, the consequence being that growers could not get the best price for their product. He concluded his comment by arguing that burning is considered part of the technology package for asparagus, this practice being necessary for the elimination of disease propagules and for breaking the biological cycle of the main pests and diseases affecting this crop.

Dr. Cádiz Lizárraga commented that the Public Health Jurisdiction had conducted an in-depth review to ascertain whether the smoke from asparagus burning is a risk factor to be considered in significant diseases of the respiratory tract. Regarding this issue, it did not find any significant evidence, instead it found that the respiratory tract conditions encountered were primarily caused by the low temperatures prevailing during this period of the year; and, regarding other diseases affecting human health, it found that these other diseases occur year-round.

Ms. Gutiérrez García acknowledged the effort of the asparagus growers as major employers promoting the regional economy, with the spinoff benefits generated by this industry. She told the asparagus growers that they have the municipality's consent to carry through with the production process all the way through to the harvest stage, provided that they perform the contractual undertakings detailed in this document so as to conduce to the efficient administration of the controlled burning program. She called on those present to work together to deal with any public demands that might arise in the course of the program. She also discussed options for a reforestation and greenspace program to include the urban area and the rural zone of this municipality. The purpose of reforestation is to mitigate the effects of asparagus burning.

With no further matters to address, and the time being 8:15 p.m. on 24 November 2015, the meeting was adjourned and those present signed these minutes to attest to their attendance.

MAYOR'S OFFICE

KARINA GARCIA GUTIERREZ
MAYOR OF CABORCA

RICARDO ARAIZA CELAYA
MUNICIPAL SECRETARY

LIBRADO MACIAS GONZALEZ
COUNCILLOR

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
DR. LUIS ALBERTO CAÑEZ LIZARRAGA
DIRECTOR, PUBLIC HEALTH
JURISDICTION No. 2

SAGARPA
JOSE RAMSES ORTEGA REYNA
DIRECTOR, CADER 02, CABORCA

[CEC Secretariat's translation of Annex A of Mexico's Response regarding submission SEM-16-001 (Agricultural Waste Burning in Sonora)]

INIFAP

FABIAN ROBLES CONTRERAS

FIELD DIRECTOR, CABORCA

ASOCIACION DE PRODUCTORES DE
FRUTAS Y HORTALIZAS DE CABORCA, A.C.

ENRIQUE RICARDO GIL MEJIA

PRESIDENT

AARON MIER NOGALES

ASPARAGUS COMMISSION

ALFONSO REYES PESQUEIRA

ASPARAGUS COMMISSION

CARLOS ALBERTO NICOLS SANTOS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LOCAL PHYTOSANITARY COMMITTEE

EDUARDO LIÑEIRO CELAYA

PRESIDENT