

## Situation of Covid-19 in Latin America

By Eng. Kenlly Mora  
SIPAS CR-PERU SMETA Audit Company  
General Manager

In order to help inform the ETI members please see below a short comment regarding the general situation in each of the main agro-exporting countries of Latin America.

### **México:**

Mexico is declared in sanitary emergency and in phase 2. The states with the highest number of infected are: Mexico City, State of Mexico, Jalisco, Nuevo León and Sinaloa. Airports and borders are open, with free transit. The agricultural sector so far has not been affected, work continues normally but with preventive measures. Only establishments considered essential are open. The Secretary of Health contemplates that in two or three weeks it will go to phase 3

### **Guatemala:**

Many companies are not working, so the government authorized, through the Ministry of Labor, an electronic procedure for the registration, control and authorization of suspension of employment contracts. Employers will be able to make use of this only during the emergency (which does not have a stipulated time) and may suspend one, several or all workers, taking advantage of the state of public calamity decreed by the government (governmental agreement 140-2020).

The Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations has expressed concern about the diminution in sales or income generation, which is why they estimate that if this rate continues, 48% of the job position will be seriously at risk of being lost.

### **Nicaragua:**

The Government is not issuing social distancing recommendations as they are avoiding the recognize the WHO and OPS recommendations this puts workers and general population at risk.

The official report of 6 cases is not true, there are more cases and many deaths, they make crowds to increase infections such as meetings with businessmen and activities on the beaches to celebrate the summer, only Aeromexico was flying and the seafood and bean companies are working.

### **Costa Rica:**

The agro-industrial sector continues to work. Agro-exportation has decreased because consumption has decreased in destination countries, forcing exporting companies to find out how to place the fruit (donations). In the industrial sector they are diversifying towards consumer products necessary during the pandemic and thus not closing operations.

The Government authorized suspension of contracts and reduction of working hours as measures for the affected companies. Workers who have seen their income affected by the situation are withdrawing part of the labor capitalization fund that banks have had since the creation of the Worker Protection Law in 2001. The Government will give a subsidy of 100.000 to 200.000 colones (approximately USD 177 to USD 353) for family up to 3 months in cases where they lost the job.

### **Panama:**

They are under total quarantine in the country, border closures, and transportation. Until now, the Government has the agro-agroindustrial sector with permission to continue working under the safe-conduct modality on site and the same for the movement of cargo. A lot of work has to be done to contain the virus so that it does not reach production areas, which in that case would limit production, as has been the case with Minera Panamá, which has positive cases and was closed temporarily. Measures are complemented with an attached document.

### **Ecuador:**

There is an unofficial report by the government on a total of more than 600 dead, the issue of the collection of corpses is a political issue or fight, the province most affected is Guayas and the area of Monte Cristi where tuna is processed, this because people do not respect the instructions given. The number of corpses has exceeded the expected figures and they are having to use cardboard caskets for the dead.

The banana plantations and the shrimp and tuna production sector continue working even with the curfews. They have had problems in the processing plants due to positive cases that have had to close plants.

Regarding internal supply, the Government has managed to define 4 routes for the supply of food from the different markets of the country, also achieving processes that guarantee the safety of carriers. They are doing a strong job of identifying and penalizing those who take advantage of speculation on the prices of basic necessities.

### **Colombia:**

People have restrictions to leave, many companies do not have supplies and are slowing down their processes, they do not have a place to locate their products due to export issues, there are cases of Covid in the avocado areas but they are not at a peak of contagion that limits them to work. in the fields, although some administrative tasks are done by telework. In the banana, coffee and flower production areas, they still manage to maintain the crops, and their production activities are quite normal.

### **Brasil:**

States where the number of infections is above the national average must have a full quarantine. States where the infection is lower than the national average have vertical isolation (only for risk patients). The measures have largely depended on the governors of each state. The sources of contagion are in the capitals or main cities of the departments, not affecting the entire population.

The agro-industrial sector continues to work normally, although an internal economy is expected to affect the fruit and vegetable sector due to the closure of restaurants and recreation areas.

In most departments, the tasks are quite normal, including public transport, but applying preventive measures (use of a mask and alcohol gel).

### **Peru:**

Complete country in compulsory quarantine, only people who carry out medical, police, armed forces, food supply center, or other activities that are indispensable may transit; All these workers must carry their pass to circulate, identity document and identification of the company for which they work.

The government has been taking a series of important measures to confront this pandemic, such as economic support of 380 soles to the most vulnerable and low-income families in the country.

Agro-exportation: It is known that food exports have not stopped, the market is stable. Companies that are not in the harvest season have reduced their staff, and companies that are in production peaks must be granting the personal pass to all their workers and the appropriate measures to prevent contagion.

SUNAFIL PERU has started a system of visits to some agro-industries in order to provide technical assistance and verify whether preventive measures and sanitary controls are being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Chile:**

The country is in partial quarantine in the areas where more infections have been detected than in two southern cities and in Santiago, which is the capital only in some municipalities with the highest index.

The government enacted an employment protection law for companies in which workers can collect their unemployment insurance for the months of the emergency and employers must continue to pay the corresponding contributions for health and social security for retirement, so, the contract is suspended for the period of the quarantine. Many companies have embraced this law and there are many other small companies that have gone bankrupt as a result of the social outbreak and the Covid situation that have come close to one another. The fields continue to function as fruit continues to be exported.

### **Dominican Republic:**

With restrictions to go out for more than 15 days, it is a critical situation and the mango processes are stopped. Banana companies continue to work, for the maintenance of cultivation and supply of markets.

### **Puerto Rico:**

The mango companies continue with basic tasks, some in remote work, many cases of Covid but they are not like in the continental area in relation to the dead. Other food industries such as beverages, water and bakery continue their operations with basic and essential personnel. Administrative areas with telework.

I you have any additional questions please contact me at: [kmora@sipascr-peru.com](mailto:kmora@sipascr-peru.com) or whatsapp (+506) 8826-4311.