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Cuba will immunize one million cattle with drug developed by scientists from Camaguey

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Cuba aims to reach more than one million cattle in 2018 with the anti-tick product GAVAC, produced by the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (IGBC) of the province of Camagüey, for the program of integrated control of the tick *Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus*.

To achieve this, around a third of the bovine mass of the country would benefit with this drug, which reduces the populations of the mite and the incidence of diseases transmitted by blood parasites such as babesiosis and anaplasmosis, and therefore improving animal health.

In conversation with the Cuban News Agency, Yamilka Ramirez Núñez, principal specialist of the Business Group of the IGBC in the territory, explained that since 2017 there has been a quantitative and qualitative leap in the implementation of GAVAC in the country, thanks to the collaboration of several institutions.

The Ministry of Agriculture has the program of integrated control of the tick among its priority objectives, in both the Department of Animal Health is responsible to certify the effectiveness of the implementation of GAVAC, declared, as well as binding on the ground that the required, said Yamilka.

Precisely, one of the actions of 2018 will be the epidemiological assessment of tick populations, to determine the areas of greatest incidence of *Rhipicephalus* (*Boophilus*) *microplus*, where should concentrate the immunization of livestock that live in those areas, he said the specialist.

In order to fulfill the commitment agreed must be produced about 2.5 million doses of 2018 in this GAVAC, little more than the previous calendar when vaccinated over 900 thousand heads of cattle.

After several years with difficulties to position itself in the domestic market, from 2015 are experiencing an increasing use of biotech drug, thanks to the joint efforts of the promoters of the IGBC with several institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Association of Small Farmers and others.

The strengthening of the national livestock GAVAC contributes to the substitution of anti-tick chemicals that, in addition to its high cost on the international market, affect the health of the animal, create resistance in ticks after prolonged use and pollute the environment.

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