

Cuban government recommit to energy and agriculture

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Earlier this year, US Senators John Boozman and Michael Bennet submitted a draft bill to remove restrictions to private financing for US agricultural exports to Cuba, stating; 'We've heard loud and clear that American farmers and ranchers want the opportunity to compete and sell their product around the world, including in the Cuban market,' Bennet said in a communiqué.

'Cuba imports 80 percent of its food' has recommitted to capital investments alongside co-operation agreement in prioritises sectors such as renewable energy and food security is forging entrepreneurs, investment and employment, part of the national development strategy to the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba.

In keeping with Cuba's recent business forum on foreign investment the application of the Helms-Burton law, which codifies the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States, Oil refinery production, Tobacco cultivation, and pork production have recommenced on a larger scale.

Oil refinery production

The Sergio Soto refinery in Cabaiguán, in the province of Sancti Spíritus, resumed production after completing the general repair of the furnaces, reports the Granma newspaper today.

'This plant, the only one in the country that processes national crude oil, began to deliver about 300 tons of asphalt liquid daily.' According to Lester Alemán Hurtado, general manager of the refinery, there was a real metamorphosis in the furnaces, vital in the process of heating and subsequent distillation of the raw material.

Hurtado pointed out that the work included the complete replacement of the structure of the furnaces, the respective supports, the pipes, the temperature measurement systems, and the refractory walls.

It also included the installation of two new flame arresters, which contribute to reducing gas emissions into the atmosphere, an old demand of the inhabitants of the area.

The repair represents a boost for the production of petroleum products in the industry, particularly for the manufacture of the asphalt liquid for the island's road infrastructure.

The investment is valued at more than \$760,000 was made by the company's forces, maintenance to electric power plants and specialized technical services Cienfuegos.

Tobacco growers in central Cuba

Tobacco growers in the Cuban central province of Ciego de Avila create the conditions to set next August seedbeds for the 2019-2020 sowing season, scheduled for October.

Luis Enrique Perdomo Martínez, manager at the Florencia agricultural company, in charge in the province of the tobacco crops, told the Cuban News Agency that they are currently working on the preparation of the land to form 9,900 traditional stonemasons, 28 imported root balls and 18 of national origin to obtain 2.29 million 200 thousand seedlings.

This amount of seeds will be distributed in 230 hectares that are conditioned for the modality of sun, from which is the filling and capote (a layer that gives the flavor to the tobacco) for the consumption in the country, explained Martinez. 'Another 500 hectares will also be planted in the cover variant in order to ensure export layer,' he said.

Since 2006 the plan to plant-covered tobacco has been on the rise, with 20 hectares added during the last campaign to reach 500, which allows them to respond to demand and remain among the first three Cuban entities that achieve with quality, this important line for sale abroad, after one in Mayabeque and another in Matanzas, added Martinez.

The Ciego de Avila agricultural sector added to its foreign marketing portfolio the rolled cigars produced in the Base Business Unit (UEB) of Tamarindo, in the municipality of Florence.

This is the first of the three factories that are dedicated to cigars, in including their productions in the Cuban export system through a contract with the joint venture Habanos S.A, whom it supplies with assortments of Montecristo 4 and JLPiedra brands.

Pork Production

In line with the development plans being promoted in Cuba to recover the program of State production of pork, the province of Granma renewed an old integral pig center, whose structure dates from 1986, when it was inaugurated by the Commander in Chief Fidel Castro.

The entity will initially have 1,000 breeders, which after four months, at the end of 2019, will be able to begin to provide offspring's, said Yusleidys Perez Prats, director of the Granma Porcine company.

Perez Prats clarified that the concept of integral implies to attend, in the same place, from the birth to the fattening of the animal, and a production capacity of 3,000 tons of meat is foreseen, which will allow increasing the volumes of delivery to the industry in 2020.

The development plan," Perez Prats said, "includes the recovery of three premises in the Pedregales Base, a business unit of Bayamo, which has 1,100 breeders and will receive another 500.

That growth, which much will depend on food self-sufficiency, seeks to reverse the imbalance between population density and current deficient production, and this year, has strengthened the corn planting campaign in the province.

Pérez Prats explained that, according to estimates, this crop will provide the pig program with some 26,000 tons of the cereal, which ensures more than 70 percent of the necessary feed.

Yamilka Ricardo González, an engineer in charge of the investment in the 26 de Julio pig integral center, said that work is being done on the rehabilitation of the 22 existing buildings, including floors, feeders, roof, hydraulic and electrical installations, residual system and interior roads.

The work includes the maintenance of three oxidation ponds, repairs in the administrative area, kitchen, dining room, and bathrooms, as well as the construction of a sanitary filter and a biodigester, he added.

As a result of the food deficit that affected the country in the first quarter of 2019, Granma stopped delivering 266 tons of pork to the industry until the end of last June.

Looking ahead to the second half of the year, it has the necessary animals and has been able to deliver 80 percent of food for fattening in the cooperative and peasant sector, which offers greater guarantees of recovery.

Although it will be very difficult to comply with the initial plan of 11,364 tons, the pig farmers of the territory do not cease in this effort, as it is proven that they have greater potential and so demonstrated in 2018, impacting a record of 12,000 tons.
