
SEMINARS RESULT IN INCREASED USE OF U.S. COTTONSEED MEAL IN VERACRUZ



Exports of U.S. cottonseed meal to Veracruz, Mexico, will increase to 300 MT per month this year, from a baseline of zero in 2002. These record exports of U.S. cottonseed meal to Veracruz have a value of \$548,000 annually and indicate that Mexican customers responded positively to seminars given by Cotton Council International (CCI) and the National Cottonseed Products Association (NCPA).

CCI and NCPA's annual technical seminars in Veracruz from 2002-2004 educated the region's cattle and dairy farmers on the benefits of using U.S. cottonseed meal to improve the performance of beef and dairy cattle, and provided a foundation for nutritionists and feedlot operators to include cottonseed meal in feed rations.

Producers in Veracruz, Mexico, were receptive to CCI and NCPA's promotional efforts despite two main constraints to the use of U.S. cottonseed in the region: the availability of soybean meal from a nearby plant and the uncertainty of the effect on cattle of gossypol, a naturally-occurring toxin found in the cotton plant and seed.

Overcoming these constraints, CCI and NCPA's seminars pointed out that cottonseed meal is widely accepted as a ruminant feed in the U.S. CCI and NCPA also presented scientific research indicating that levels of gossypol in U.S. cottonseed meal should not adversely affect cattle.

CCI and NCPA plan to continue offering seminars at least once per year to address specific questions regarding the use of cottonseed meal in feedlot or dairy and supplementation in tropical pasture conditions. The tropics, covering a large portion of Mexico, still constitute a tremendous potential market for protein sources.

Cottonseed represents up to 15 percent of a U.S. cotton producer's income, and cottonseed meal comprises between 25 to 40 percent of that value. By educating new customers about U.S. cottonseed meal, CCI and NCPA are working to ensure that U.S. producers and cottonseed processors have the opportunity to compete effectively and profitably in the market.

