

## AMLO announces guaranteed prices for five agricultural products

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'Because of irresponsible, corrupt technocrats Mexico buys more corn abroad than any other country'



President López Obrador has announced the guaranteed prices the government will pay farmers for five agricultural products.

Speaking at an event in Zacatecas yesterday, López Obrador said that more than two million farmers will benefit from the program and that it will help Mexico to achieve food self-sufficiency.

Farmers will be paid 5,610 pesos (US \$293) a tonne for corn up to a limit of 20 tonnes; 14,500 pesos (US \$757) a tonne for beans up to a limit of 15 tonnes; 5,790 pesos (US \$302) a tonne for wheat up to 100 tonnes; 6,120 pesos (US \$320) a tonne for rice up to 120 tonnes; and 8.2 pesos (US \$0.43) a liter for milk.

López Obrador pledged to maintain the prices and later increase them but didn't specify when. He bemoaned the fact that Mexico is forced to import a lot of basic food products.

“Corn is originally from Mexico, this blessed plant has fed people for centuries and now because of irresponsible, corrupt technocrats, Mexico buys more corn abroad than any other country. See where we’ve got to,” López Obrador said.

“With rice, we’re worse. We’re buying 85% of what we consume. With wheat, it’s the same. More than 70% is bought abroad,” the president said.

López Obrador blamed past governments for implementing policies that failed farmers.

“They demonized subsidies, they said ‘why would we support the countryside’ and they left the producers in a state of defenselessness,” he said.

“[That’s] something that foreign governments don’t do, they support their farmers . . . In the United States, the government gives the corn grower, the wheat grower, up to 80% of their production cost as a subsidy, they have [access to] cheap credit, they have a lot of support and here the growers were left to their own fate,” López Obrador said.

Ignacio Ovalle, chief of Mexican Food Security (Segalmex), a new agency created by the government, said farmers will no longer be forced to sell their crops cheaply to unscrupulous purchasers.

Government collection centers will be established where producers will take their crops for sale, he said. The first centers will be in Zacatecas, Durango and Chihuahua and mainly benefit bean farmers.

Agriculture Secretary Víctor Villalobos rejected any suggestion that guaranteeing prices was akin to giving a handout.

“What we intend is to give certainty [to farmers] for their effort, fairly compensate their work and foster well-being,” he said.

Source: [Milenio](#) (sp)