

Moscamed, the Biofactory Brazil Hopes Will End Fruit Fly

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In March, Brazilian fruit growers will gain a new and powerful ally in their fight against the fruit fly, a pest that destroys a considerable share of the harvest and lowers productivity.

To combat this villain, Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture created the Moscamed biofactory, which will produce sterile male insects to curb the natural reproduction of the species.

The biofactory, which will be installed in the city of Juazeiro, in the state of Bahia, in the Brazilian Northeast, will be capable of producing 200 million insects each week. The goal is to meet the needs of all Brazil's fruit growing centers.

The Ministry of Agriculture's initiative also counts on the support of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of National Integration.

Maria Julia Sinhorete, head of the pest control division of the Department of Agricultural Protection, explains that the insects are first sterilized and then released in the fields in large numbers.

"They compete with wild males for the females, which produce infertile eggs, thus reducing the pest population from generation to generation," she comments.

According to Sinhorete, the intention is to eradicate the pest in order to ensure Brazil's position as the world's third largest fruit exporter. The sterile insect technique is already employed in various countries to combat fruit flies.

"This method seeks to diminish the fruit fly population without the use of pesticides. It is secure and will allow us to guarantee the quality of Brazilian fruit for export to countries such as Argentina and Japan," she affirms.

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