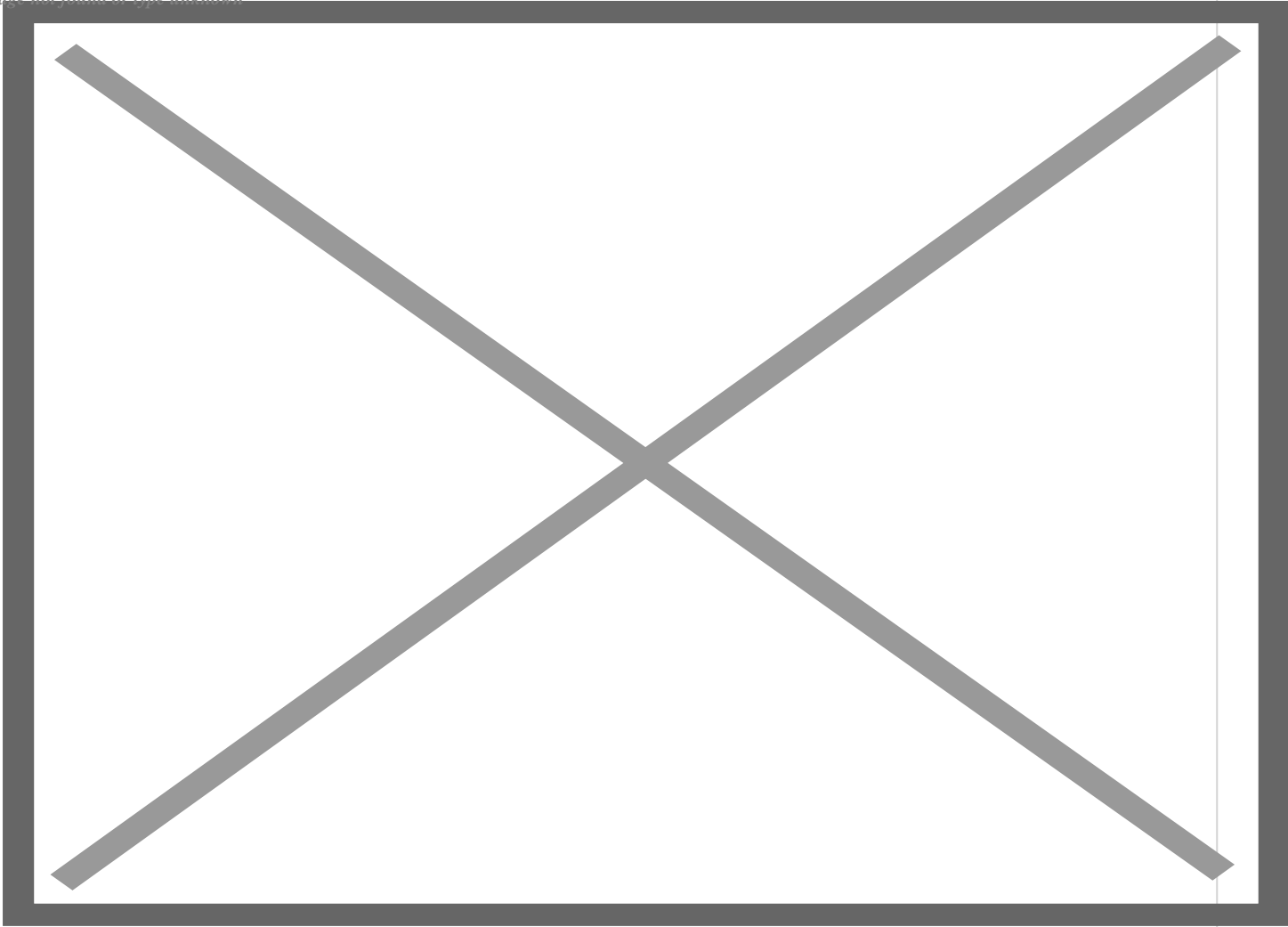


Cuban tobacco workers with masks sow postures

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There is no tobacco industry worker who ignores the importance of the crop for the national good.

By Roberto Morejón

Wearing masks and protected from the intense autumn sun in October, Cuban vegueros plant tobacco stalks, a bulwark of the economy, today punished by COVID-19 and the U.S. blockade of the island.

What in Cuba is called the tobacco campaign, began simultaneously in the provinces destined to the program, corresponding to the 2021-2022 stage, with the forecast of covering 25 thousand hectares.

The greatest sowing perspective corresponds to the western province of Pinar del Río, the one with the best soils and experience.

There, 510 hectares of the Virginia variety will be planted, an indispensable raw material for the cigarette factory of the Mariel Special Development Zone, a star investment pole.

The second most important province in tobacco, the central province of Sancti Spíritus, also began planting, with the task of expanding the areas to be planted and the stockpiling with respect to last year.

Both Pinar del Río and Sancti Spíritus must undertake the plans in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak, but the progress of vaccination with their own immunogens, as in the rest of the country, promises future incorporations of manual forces.

The unfavorable availability of inputs and fuel hangs over all the farmers, given the economic problems caused by the worsening of the blockade and the effects of the pandemic.

The most experienced farmers recommend that novice farmers return to ancestral practices such as animal traction and biological means.

Nevertheless, many of the farmers are confident that they will meet the estimates of obtaining 27,000 tons of tobacco, contracted in its entirety.

To do so, they assure to select correctly the varieties to be planted and to be stimulated by new forms of payment contemplated in the monetary order applied in the country.

There is no worker in the tobacco industry, both harvesters and tobacco twisters, who ignores the importance of the crop for the national good because of its safe shipment to foreign markets.

It is true that the pandemic forced the cancellation of a famous festival promoting the world-famous Havana cigars and that the forces employed in the activity suffered pressure.

But Cuba does not shirk its commitments to invoice annually about 100 million units of twisted tobacco, destined to its persevering customers.

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