

Although agrarian reform was in the Constitution, it did not solve the problem of poor ownership distribution because the government did not enforce its requirements.

### Modern Epoch (1910-Present)

After the adoption of the Mexican Constitution in 1917, there was a slow acceptance of the Agrarian law. In the beginning the law only considered land restitution to native Indian people who had lost their property. Later, the constitution was amended to include the amount of land available for common use by communities.

Until 1934, parcelling of lands was slow. The principal thought was that it was a transitory situation to convert the people to small land owners so that very small tracts were given to the people to satisfy the law's requirements. The agrarian apportionment increased during the years of 1934-40. The amount of land apportioned during this period was greater than during all previous years.

In 1946, Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution was amended to provide for the enlargement of small properties.

Since 1965 there has been a low rate of agricultural production due to the fact that land apportionment had increased and the large land owners refused to invest in increased production on land with an insecure title. Consequently, agrarian policy was modified and, in 1971, the federal law of the Agrarian Reform was enacted stipulating the amount of land an individual could own.

From 1971 to 1976 the policy of land tenancy was to support the organization of the ejido with emphasis on collective-use of the land and the creation of rural enterprises. Also in this period, Federal water law (1972) and the General Law of Rural Loan (1975) were enacted. The Federal water law ensured that water for irrigation was available for all people, not just the large landowners. The General Law of Rural Loan is important because it pro-

vided funds for the improvement of ejidos and for cooperative ventures such as local facilities to process their own products.

In summary, the purpose of the Agrarian legislation is supported by Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution and these three regulatory laws, the federal law of agrarian reform, the federal water law, and the rural loans law.

Finally, land apportionment was terminated by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari on November 1, 1989. The new federal policy emphasizes economic support to agricultural enterprises allowing the copartnership of private institutions and Ejidatarios (individuals who live on and work the ejidos).

The significance of this change is that the Ejidatarios can now enter into an agreement with an outside investor to increase the productivity and profit of the ejido. Another significant change is that the new federal policy supports the individual ownership of land, thereby providing greater security for private landowners. This has revived interest in investing in the improvement of their lands. Mexico today is entering a new Epoch in agricultural productivity. The changes are not only in agriculture but in all areas of economic growth.

### Literature Cited

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## The "Gustavo Aguirre Benavides" Botanical Garden

*This garden is one of the tour attractions at the Summer Meeting in Monterrey in July.*

Botanical gardens are natural or artificial areas where live plant collections are exhibited. They provide valuable information that can be useful for teaching, research, conservation, and recreational purposes.

The Universidad Autónoma Agraria "Antonio Narro", located seven km south of the city of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, has, in the botanical garden "Gustavo Aguirre Benavides", a garden which contains the plants from the arid and semi-arid zones of northern Mexico. It consists of 2.5 hectares located at 25 degrees 22' 41" latitude N and 101 degrees 00' 00" longitude W at an altitude of 1,743 m.

The plant collections are representative of vegetation types most common in northern Mexico. These include Chihuahuan Desert Shrub, Lechugilla Shrub, Yucca Woodland, Alkali Shrub, Gypsophilous Shrub, Arborescent Cactus Shrub; Grasslands with grama, sacaton and

tobosa; Montane Chaparral, and Montane Woodlands. The special collections also include forage and medicinal plants, cacti and succulents, a Pinetum, and an area of rare and threatened plants. The plant families best represented in the garden are: Cactaceae, Poaceae, Agavaceae, Asteraceae and Fabaceae. The collection includes a total of 47 families, with 147 genera.

The main objectives of the botanical garden are (1) collection and conservation of plants with taxonomic, ecological, genetical value and plants listed on the categories of the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and (2) collection of plants of forage, industrial, medicinal, and ornamental value.

The botanical garden "Gustavo Aguirre Benavides" has an important collection of plants from the arid and semi-arid zones and is one of the more important gardens of northern Mexico. It serves as a reference library for natural resource students, technicians and range managers.