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NEWS METHYL BROMIDE WAS USED IN PLANTATIONS OF MELON AND STRAWBERRIES

## Costa Rica bans import of methyl bromide, chemical that destroys the ozone layer

MICHELLE M. SOTO - September 24, 2013 at 12:00 am

Costa Rica is the first country in Central America to stop using methyl bromide, a chemical to disinfect the soil and remove weeds and pests in preparation for watermelon, strawberries, flowers, tobacco and melon crops.

From this year, the import of this substance is prohibited in the country, which has been declared free of this chemical, considered one of the major destroyers of the ozone layer, responsible for protecting us from the Sun's rays.

"This is an achievement according to the pioneering spirit of the country that has acquired other findings in environmental issues," said Yoriko Yasukawa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme.

Instead of using methyl bromide, farmers employ techniques such as the use of the Sun's rays to increase temperature, crop rotation, the use of greener herbicides and the use of microorganisms to maintain the health of the soil and control weeds and other pests.

UNDP and the Ministry of the environment (Minae) yesterday recognized companies of del Monte and Exporpack these efforts.

"Now we can claim, all right, a mark on the sites of commercialization, in such a way that ethical products have such privileged treatment since they reduced chemicals harmful to human health and the environment", stressed the Minister René Castro.

**Other actions.** The Elimination of methyl bromide was one of the measures taken by the country in compliance with the Montreal Protocol, agreement of a universal character that seeks the protection of the ozone layer. This was ratified by Costa Rica in 1991.