Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

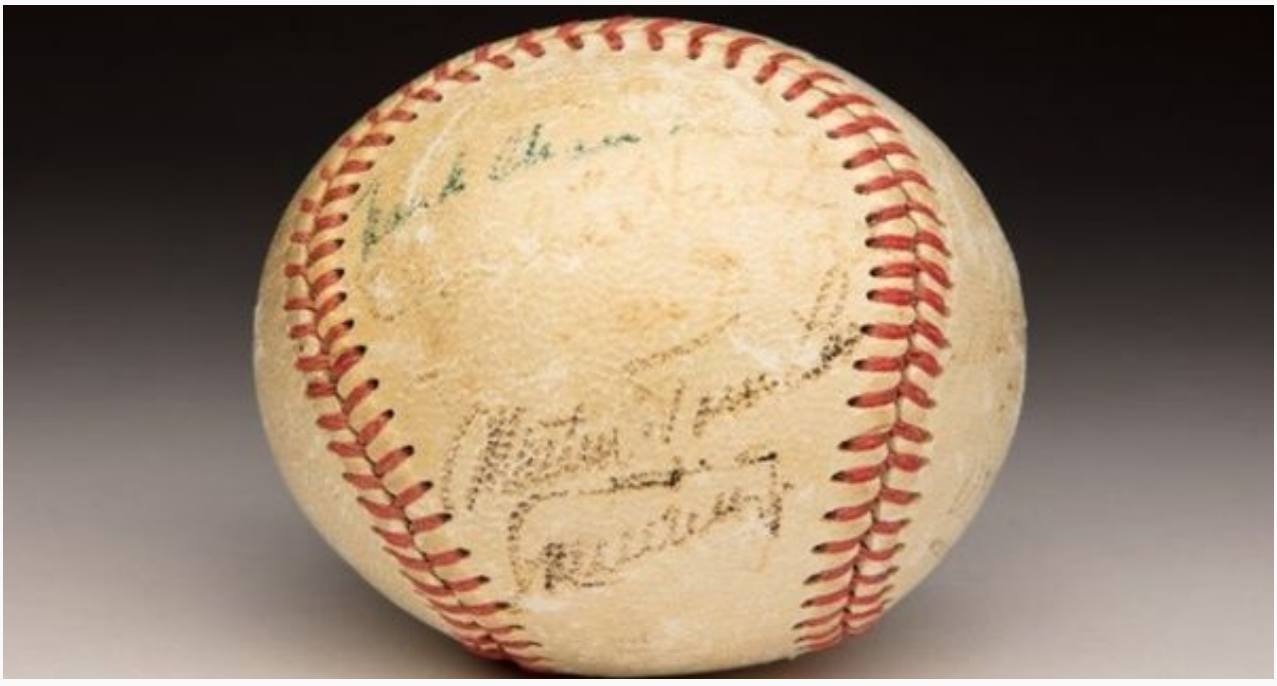
20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Baseball, from the US To Cuba and Latin America

It was at the Palmar de Junco stadium, in the Cuban province of Matanzas, where the first baseball game outside the United States was officially played.

Baseball is a very popular sport in Latin America, with a long history dating back to the late 19th century. Although it has its roots in the U.S., its influence quickly spread to the Caribbean and Latin America, where it became a national pastime in many countries in the region.



Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

The first officially regulated baseball team known to exist was formed in New York in 1842 as the New York Knickerbocker Baseball Club. The sport soon spread to the Caribbean, and a few years later it began to be played in Cuba in 1868.

The geographic proximity and the close historical ties between these two countries contributed to the development of baseball in Cuba. It was the Creoles, sons of Spaniards born on the island, who introduced it from the U.S. They studied university careers on American soil and when they returned to Cuba on vacation, they began to play it for entertainment.

The Game Spread Quickly

At first, it was banned by the Spanish rulers, as it was considered a very violent game. The use of wooden bats in a country that was shaking the drums of war was not well regarded by the Spanish authorities. However, it never stopped being played, both in high society and in the poorest neighborhoods, but it was not until 1874 that the first game was officially registered on the island.

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

It was at the Palmar de Junco Stadium, in the province of Matanzas, where the first official baseball game was played outside the U.S. A team from Havana faced a team from Matanzas. The Havana players were Cubans who had learned the game in the U.S. and some of them were already practicing it very assiduously at that time. Most of the Matanzas players were citizens of the U.S. who had settled in this city for military reasons. On that occasion, the Havana team won, in a fervent demonstration that baseball had been assimilated with amazing capacity in this region. It was an achievement that would last forever.

Baseball continued to be played in Cuba until the Cuban Professional League was created in 1917. Two teams stood out, the Leones de la Habana and the Alacranes del Almendares. The latter, until their disappearance, were the winningest team in the Cuban league, with great performances in the regional championships of the Caribbean league.

After Cuba, baseball spread to Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, where it soon became a favorite national pastime. In 1890 Cubans introduced the game in Yucatán and in 1905 a regional league was born, made up mainly of Cuban players.

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

It was not until 1925 that the Mexican Professional League saw the light of day. In the Dominican Republic, the Cuban influence is also present: the first clubs were founded by Cubans in 1891. It is worth mentioning the presence of Cuban players in the first Dominican championship in 1912. In Puerto Rico, baseball arrived a little later: the first game took place on June 2, 1896, in the city of Santurce. The Professional League was born in 1938, in Mayagüez.

In 1946, the Professional Leagues of Venezuela and Panama were created and in 1948 the idea of holding the Caribbean Series, which would bring together in one tournament the champion teams of the Professional Leagues of each country. The first series took place a year later, of course, in Cuba. Puerto Rico's Mayagüez, Venezuela's Escogido, Panama's Spur Cola and Cuba's Alacranes del Almendares faced each other at Havana's Cerro Stadium. The Cuban team, led by star catcher Fermín Guerra, won, undefeated. Until 1960, the last tournament in which Cuba participated, the island won seven times. With his departure, the series was interrupted until 1970. The Cubans rejoined in 2014 and a year later, the Vegueros of Pinar del Río won the title.

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Baseball's worldwide growth was capped by its inclusion in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. Regional games such as the Central American and Caribbean Games and the Pan American Games, as well as world events such as the World Cup and later the World Classic and the Premier 12, have witnessed the thrust and development of Latin American and Caribbean players, who have given brightness and color to these events.

Baseball spread rapidly, especially among the poorer population. Sports such as soccer, tennis and others were reserved for the wealthier classes; baseball, on the other hand, was a suburban pastime. While the high society played professionally in clubs, in the poorest neighborhoods it was practiced as a pastime. It was precisely from the poorest neighborhoods that the greatest players began to emerge, a demonstration that baseball is in the blood.

Published 13 March 2024

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

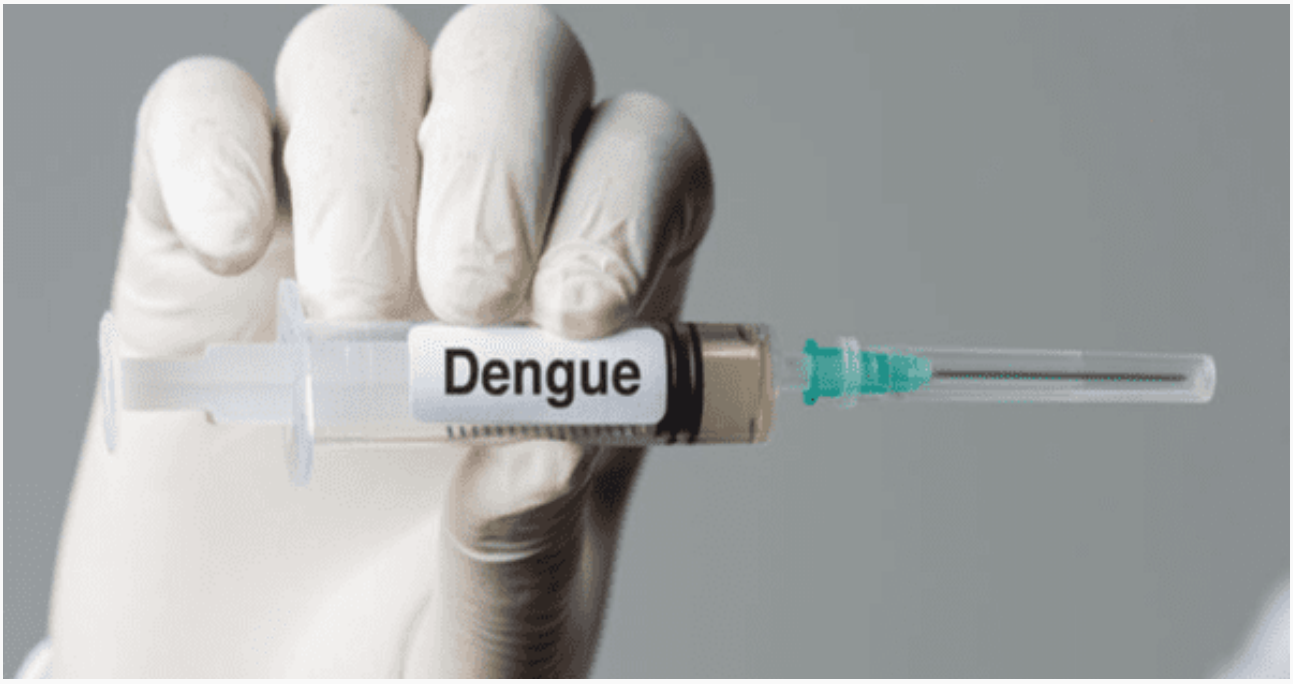
20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Cuban Biotechnology, Development of Vaccine against Dengue Fever

According to Cuban scientist Gerardo Guillén, director of Biomedical Research at the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), "Cuba seeks to make the vaccine differently."

Achieving a vaccine against dengue is a historical desire of tropical countries where it is endemic. Cuba, which took up that challenge in 1992, now has two formulations in the preclinical study phase.



Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

On October 30, 2023, several media and press agencies in Cuba and around the world reported on the donation of some 27 million euros by the Italy-Cuba National Friendship Association to the Caribbean nation's prestigious Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB). The objective was to contribute to the development of a vaccine against dengue.

According to specialists, the process of developing the candidate vaccine is complex, since to be effective it must immunize against each of the four serotypes of the virus causing the infection. This would mean achieving a shield against a disease that kills 2.5 % of those hospitalized with severe symptoms, according to figures from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Cuban Formula

There are countries that have already tested vaccines against dengue, such is the case of the Philippines, which finally stopped administering it in 2017. The vaccine in question was Dengvaxia, from the French pharmaceutical industry chain Sanofi Pasteur. After four children died of the disease in serious condition, the Philippine health authorities decided not to continue. This case showed how complex it can be to achieve a vaccine with the required effectiveness.

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

On the other hand, it has not all been bad news, Brazil approved in March 2023 the use of the tetravalent vaccine of the Japanese pharmaceutical company Takeda. This vaccine, which is 80% effective, has been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

According to Cuban scientist Gerardo Guillén, director of Biomedical Research at the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), "Cuba seeks to make the vaccine differently. Instead of using the protein found in the virus membrane, Cuban scientists are experimenting with its non-structural proteins (which encode the virus genes). The scientist explains that what they are looking for is for the vaccine to strengthen the cellular response of the person who receives it and not that of his or her antibodies. In this way, according to what they hope to prove in the laboratory, they could avoid the immunoamplification that makes the vaccine against dengue so difficult."

Although the vaccine could take a little longer than existing ones, Cuban scientists prefer it that way, explaining that it is more important to take time but do it right than to work on a schedule.

The strategy of having a vaccine produced domestically in Cuba would be extraordinary from many points of view. First, the country would greatly reduce the costs of immunization of its population. In turn, it would enter a market of billions of people in the world who are exposed to dengue along the tropical and subtropical belt, which would bring obvious economic benefits.

Published 14 March 2024

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

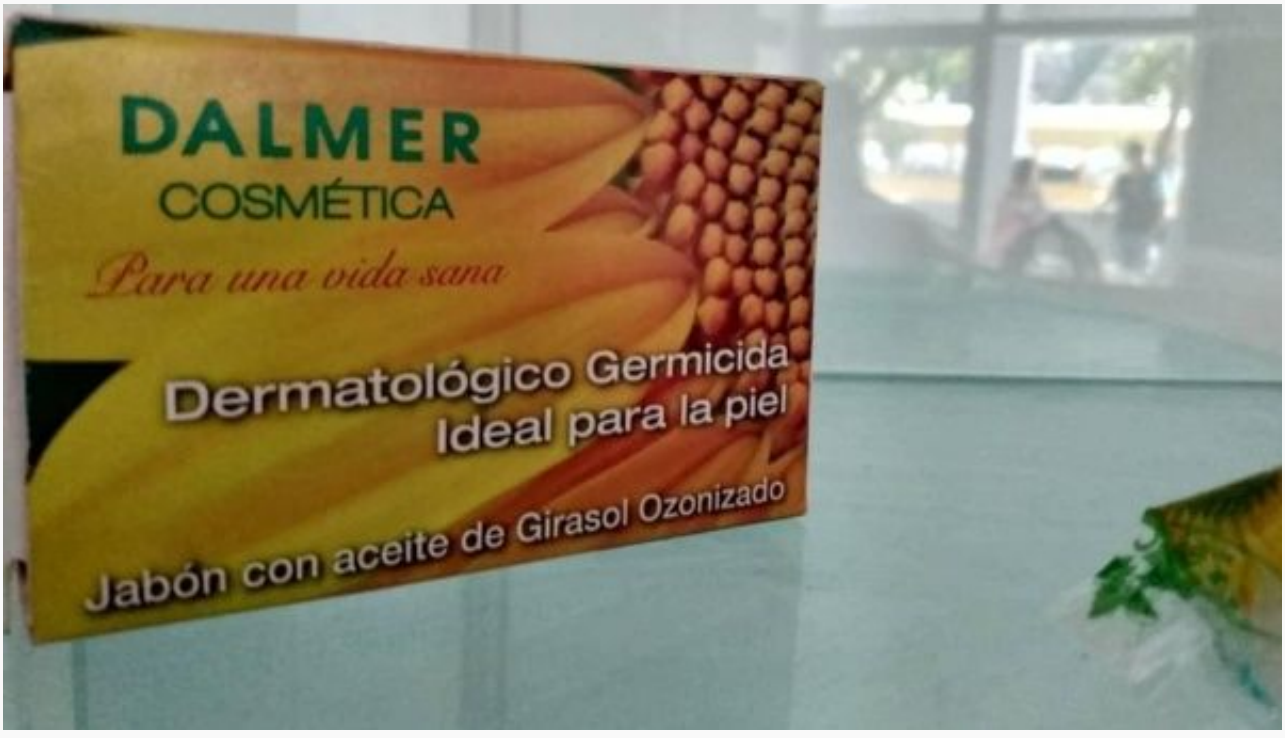
20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Cuban Ozonated Soaps: Another Achievement of Science in Cuba

Although there are no commercial contracts, soap was exported to countries such as Mexico, Venezuela and Spain.

The National Center for Scientific Research (CNIC) is currently working on the manufacture of about ten thousand units a day and approximately two hundred thousand toilet soaps based on ozonated sunflower oil (OLEOZON); currently it is the most important production of the institution.



Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Glenda Otero Rodríguez, a technologist at the CNIC's soap plant, explained that while soaps can be made from any active ingredient such as propolis, sulfur or other ozonated vegetable oil, sunflower oil was chosen for being the best scientific results demonstrated and for having a better acceptance by the public.

The production process despite being quite fast, and the numbers exceed thousands, these figures are insufficient in view of the high demand that exists and does not manage to supply even fifty percent. The biggest delays in production are due to technological failures and maintenance problems; according to Otero Rodríguez.

Although there are no commercial contracts, soap was exported to countries such as Mexico, Venezuela and Spain. Currently the goal is to increase and diversify the production to pills of thirty-one hundred and twenty grams, as well as add fragrance; a constant demand of the people who use it.
According to the article Uses and properties of ozonated vegetable oils. The Cuban experience published in 2010 by the journal CNIC, OLEOZON has a high clinical effectiveness against dermatological infections caused by fungi, viruses and bacteria, dermatitis or skin lesions such as scars, as well as its suitability to combat inflammatory acne. It also works as an oxygenator and dermal revitalizer.

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

These soaps can be purchased in any pharmacy of the national network, and in some stores specialized in the sale of products of natural origin at a price of twenty-one Cuban pesos.

In the country there are other units of medicinal soaps, such as the Production Plant of the Placental Histotherapy Center but the CNIC is the only one in the country equipped with the necessary technology to make these soaps based on ozonated vegetable oil.

Published 10 March 2024

Newsletter

A vision of Latin America and the Caribbean countries

20 March 2024

Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

Chucho Valdes Back in Charge Celebrating the 50th of Irakere

The Cuban Piano Master returns to Tour with his tribute to Irakere and his Royal Quartet.

The virtuoso Cuban pianist Chucho Valdez will restart tour celebrating the 50 years of Irakere and with his Royal Quartet and at the end of March until the end of July.



Weekly Newsletter covering Latin America and the Caribbean issues. A Project between Green Zone Foundation and Telesur.

He will be accompanied by Horacio "El Negro" Hernández (drums), José A. Gola (bass) and Roberto Jr. Vizcaíno (timbale, drums) plus a wind section formed by Eddy de Armas Jr. and Carlos Averhoff Jr., among other past members of the group.

The tour will begin this March 23 in the city of Florida after different dates in the United States, culminating the tour in Europe on July 30 in France.

Chucho Valdez is one of the largest and most prolific instrumentalists in Cuba, he was the leader of Irakere, one of the most influential Cuban groups of all time.

Irakere represented in the 1970s the avant-garde of Cuban music combining jazz with traditional Cuban music, African music, funk, rock among other genres.

It also featured top Cuban performers such as drummer Enrique Pla, saxophonists Carlos Averhoff, Orlando del Valle, Paquito D Rivera and trumpeters Arturo Sandoval among other great Cuban musicians.

Last February Chucho Valdez offered the first show of the 50th anniversary of Irakere in which he had luxury guests such as former members as the aforementioned Paquito D Rivera and Arturo Sandoval.

Published 12 March 2024