



CARIBBEAN PLANT HEALTH DIRECTORS

PROTECTING CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURE

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

A Message of Hope and Collaboration for the New Year



CPHD Forum Chairman - Mr. Nelson Laville

As we embark on this new year, I extend my warmest greetings to all members of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum.

The past year has presented numerous challenges to plant health in our region. The ever-evolving threat of plant diseases and pests, exacerbated by the increasing impact of climate change, demands unwavering dedication and innovative solutions.

Despite these challenges, the CPHD made significant strides in advancing plant health in the Caribbean - from hosting the first-ever Training of Trainers (ToT) and Farmer Field School (FFS) initiative specifically designed to prepare for a potential Foc TR4 incursion in the Caribbean to strengthening the regional response

to plant health emergencies through the formation of a robust Regional Multi-Agency Coordinating Committee (RMACC) structure.

Looking ahead, the CPHD Forum is committed to addressing emerging challenges, such as the impacts of climate change on plant health and the critical need for sustainable agricultural ecosystems. Through its evolving strategies, the forum will continue to contribute to the One Health agenda and promote safer food production.

One of the most pressing concerns we face is the decline in funding opportunities for plant health programs. This necessitates a shift in our approach. We must actively seek and expand partnerships and collaborations with regional and international organizations, research institutions, and the private sector. By leveraging collective resources and expertise, we can strengthen our capacity to address critical plant health issues.

The forum exemplifies how regional cooperation can transform agricultural resilience and sustainability. By safeguarding ecosystems, improving food security, and fostering economic growth, let us work together with a renewed sense of purpose and collaboration to safeguard the health of our plants, protect our agricultural livelihoods, and ensure food security for the Caribbean region.

I wish you all a successful and productive New Year.

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CPHD HOSTS MUSA DISEASE DIAGNOSTICS AND SURVEILLANCE REGIONAL WORKSHOP

A week-long workshop, held in Jamaica from April 15-19, 2024, significantly enhanced the Caribbean region's capacity to detect, diagnose, and manage four critical banana diseases: *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 (TR4), Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV), Banana Bract Mosaic Virus (BBrMV), and Moko disease.

Organized by the CPHD Musa Technical Working Group, in collaboration with APHIS IS Trinidad and CIRAD experts, the workshop equipped representatives from 15 Caribbean countries with the knowledge and tools needed to protect this vital crop. Bananas are a cornerstone of the region's food security, livelihoods, and export economy, but they face growing threats from emerging diseases.

The workshop covered a range of topics, including disease identification, diagnostic methods (ELISA, PCR, LAMP), surveillance techniques, and integrated disease management strategies. Notably, three potential regional laboratories for preliminary TR4 and BBTV diagnostics were identified, promising to reduce testing costs and turnaround times.

Following the workshop, a virtual check-in on July 11, 2024, reviewed draft national surveillance plans developed by participating countries. Participants are now refining these plans to conduct targeted surveys in high-risk areas within the next three months with basic materials supplied by the workshop organizers.



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This initiative marks a significant step forward in safeguarding the Caribbean banana industry and demonstrates the region's commitment to collaborative action against these devastating diseases.



CPHD STRENGTHENS REGIONAL RESPONSE TO PLANT HEALTH EMERGENCIES

A pivotal training program was conducted from March 19th to 21st, 2024, in Trinidad, aimed at bolstering the Caribbean's capacity to respond effectively to plant health emergencies. CPHD representatives, alongside key partners including APHIS IS Trinidad, GCSI, FAO, IICA, CARDI, and CAHFSA, participated in this intensive workshop.



The training, facilitated by APHIS PPQ NTEP instructors, covered Incident Command Systems (ICS) 100 and 200, National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) 0402, and the principles of Unified Command and Multi-Agency Coordinating Committees (MAC). This foundational knowledge will be instrumental in establishing a robust Regional MAC structure which will, once fully operationalized, provide critical support to Caribbean National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) during times of crisis.

This collaborative effort marks a significant step forward in enhancing the region's emergency response capabilities. The newly acquired skills and knowledge will be applied to strengthen existing early warning and emergency response initiatives, particularly those funded by regional partners, with a focus on high-impact plant pests.



CPHD ROLLS OUT PEST-CARIBBEAN TO MEMBER STATES

In February 2024, 20 CPHD member states participated in training for PeST-Caribbean, the Caribbean Plant Health Directors' (CPHD) newest safeguarding tool. Inspired by the USDA's CAPS system, PeST-Caribbean prioritizes the CPHD's Top 10 Priority Pests and offers a unified digital platform for:

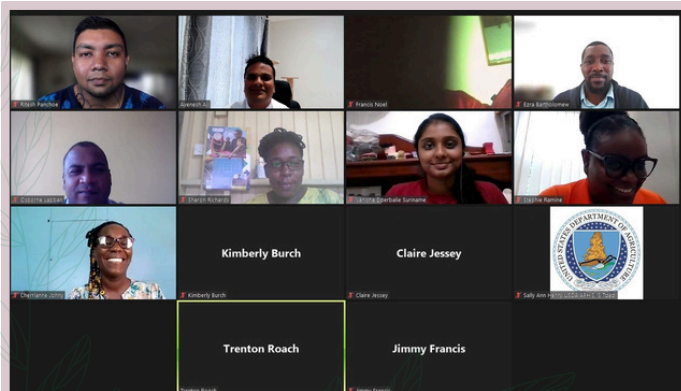


- Identification: Accessing resources to identify and diagnose pests.
- Surveillance: Monitoring pest presence and spread across the region.
- Data Management: Recording and sharing country-specific information like training, surveillance progress, and contact details.

PeST-Caribbean currently focuses on three critical pests: Citrus Canker, *Ralstonia solanacearum*, and Tuta Absoluta. Its flexible design allows for future expansion as regional needs evolve and pest management efforts progress.

Developed by APHIS IS Trinidad in collaboration with the CPHD Executive and funded by the GCSI, PeST-Caribbean builds upon the success of the Fruit Fly Monitoring System (FFMS) and the Caribbean Biosecurity Interception System (CBIS).

This new tool further strengthens regional plant health monitoring and surveillance systems.



INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES UNVEILED AT THE 11TH TWWH CONFERENCE IN MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA

Submitted by Plant Quarantine Produce Inspection Branch, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Jamaica

The 11th Meeting of the Tephritid Workers of the Western Hemisphere (TWWH) unfolded in the vibrant city of Montego Bay, Jamaica, from June 3-7, 2024 marking the first time this prestigious conference has graced the Caribbean shores. This landmark event brought together the brightest minds in agriculture to tackle one of the region's most persistent adversaries: the fruit fly.

With a mission to advance knowledge and forge new strategies for managing fruit fly populations, a crucial pest impacting agricultural productivity across the Western Hemisphere. The conference served as a crucible to foster collaboration among scientists, researchers, and agricultural experts. Attendees delved into the latest updates and solutions for fruit fly management programs, formulated a list of research priorities and fostered the development of dynamic networks.

The conference's key takeaways were nothing short of groundbreaking. Significant advancements were unveiled in the sterile insect technique (SIT), biological control methods, and integrated pest management (IPM). These cutting-edge approaches promise to mitigate fruit fly populations effectively, leveraging scientific innovations and sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact and reduce the reliance on chemical pesticides.



A resonating theme throughout the conference was the paramount importance of international cooperation in addressing the shared agricultural challenges posed by fruit flies. Participants were able to exchange invaluable insights and best practices, enhancing regional capacity and championing the adoption of innovative pest management strategies.

The Caribbean's strong representation supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining Jamaica and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), underscored the region's commitment to addressing this pressing issue. With nine participants sponsored from across the Caribbean, the conference illuminated the extensive efforts underway to manage fruit flies. Armed with this newfound knowledge, Caribbean countries are poised to implement innovative strategies to control their fruit fly populations, strengthening their agricultural sector and enhancing food security.

In summary, the 11th TWWH Conference epitomized the power of collaborative efforts and technological innovations in driving sustainable agricultural development in the Western Hemisphere. The advancements presented at the Conference herald a new era of effective solutions for fruit fly infestation, promising substantial benefits for agricultural communities while promoting environmental stewardship and food security.

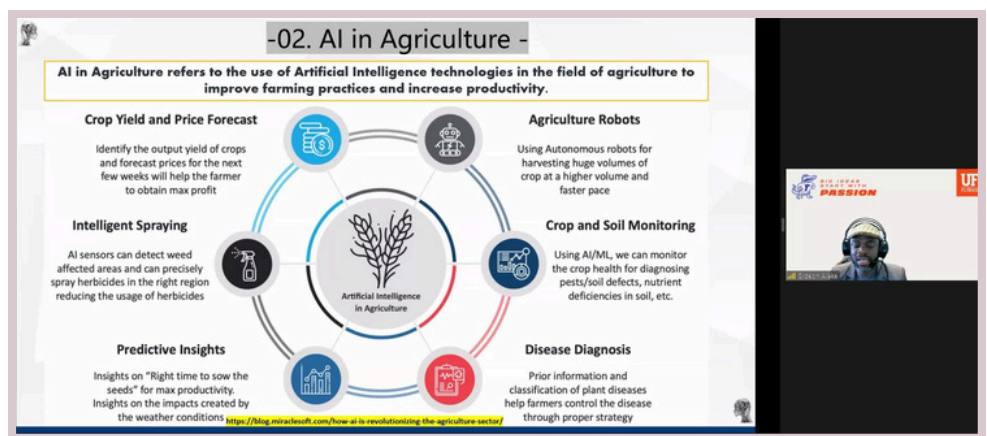
CPHD'S AI WEBINAR SERIES CONTINUES WITH EXPLORATION OF DATA MANAGEMENT AND PEST CONTROL

Following the well-received Part I of the CPHD's AI Webinar Series on December 1st, 2023, a second session was held on March 15th, 2024. This iteration focused on practical applications of AI in agriculture.

The webinar featured two engaging presentations:

- **Harnessing the Power of AI for Efficient Management of Crop Diseases and Pests** by Dr. Gideon Alake, Research Assistant Scientist from the University of Florida.

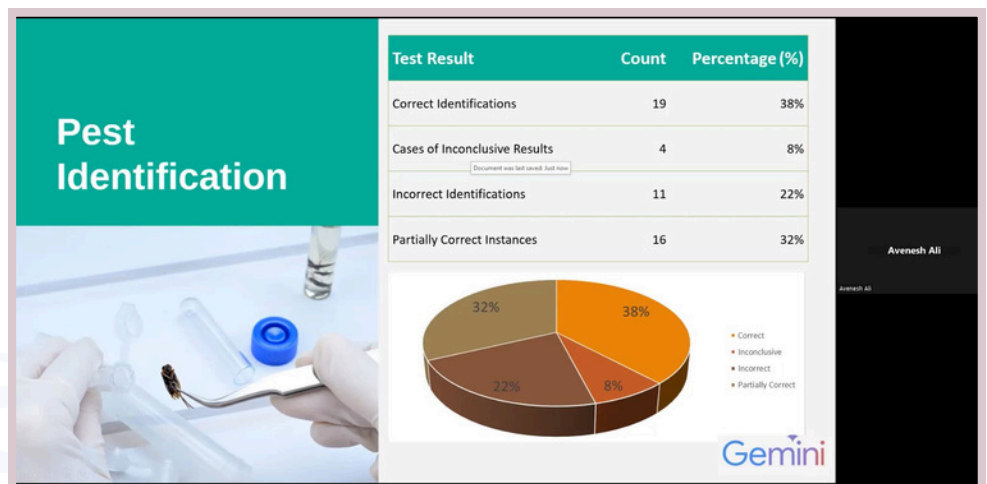
Dr. Alake's presentation explored topics such as AI in pest management, data and computational challenges, and the future outlook of AI, including policy considerations, funding strategies, and integrating AI with other emerging solutions for crop pest management.



- **Planning and Administration: Using AI to Analyze Agricultural Data** by Mr. Avenesh Ali, CPHD's Web Developer/Consultant.

Mr. Ali presented case studies demonstrating how popular AI tools like Google's Gemini (for pest identification) and ChatGPT (for agricultural data analysis) can be applied in real-world scenarios.

This informative session provided valuable insights into the potential of AI to transform agricultural practices.



CPM (IPPC) – ROME (APRIL 15-19, 2024)

The Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-18) was held from 15th – 19th April 2024 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations Rome, Italy. Over 400 delegates from contracting parties of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) were brought together to discuss the status of plant health worldwide and strategies to promote prevention and management of plant pests.

The session saw the adoption of modifications to four draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs). These updated ISPMs will likely address emerging threats and improve international harmonization of plant health practices.

Participants received updates on the implementation of the IPPC's eight Development Agenda Items of the IPPC's Strategic Framework 2020-2030. These items encompass crucial areas like capacity development, emergency pest prevention, and phytosanitary reporting.

Side sessions addressed topics of interest to the plant health community, including:

- CPM Orientation for new delegates
- The growing challenge of e-commerce and its implications for plant pest risks
- The concerning spread of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical Race 4 (TR4), a devastating banana disease

For more information visit: <https://www.ippc.int/en/news/plant-health-takes-center-stage-as-18th-session-of-the-commission-on-phytosanitary-measures-opens/>

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PADI-WEB: AUTOMATED DATA RETRIEVAL FOR IMPROVED PLANT AND ANIMAL HEALTH MONITORING

The CaribGREEN project recently hosted a PADI-Web training workshop in Trinidad and Tobago from February 6th to 8th, 2024. PADI-Web, a tool for automatic data retrieval, empowers health monitoring efforts.

This innovative tool automatically collects epidemiological data from various websites. This "scraping" process allows for the automatic gathering of reports on emerging diseases and surveillance information from a variety of online sources. Originally focused on animal diseases like African Swine Fever, PADI-Web has recently expanded to include plant diseases such as TR4.

Led by Dr. Mathieu Roche and other CIRAD members, the in-person workshop equipped participants with the knowledge and skills to utilize PADI-Web effectively.

For more information visit <https://www.padi-web-one-health.org/>

CARIBBEAN ANIMAL HEALTH TAKES CENTER STAGE IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

St. Vincent and the Grenadines played host to a critical series of meetings focused on animal health in the Caribbean in late April. The Caribbean Animal Health Network, or CaribVET, convened its 19th Steering Committee Meeting and 5th General Assembly from April 22nd to 24th.



This marked the first in-person gathering of the CaribVET network since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CaribVET General Assembly brought together the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) from all 34 member countries and territories of the network. This assembly, along with the preceding Steering Committee Meeting, provided a platform for collaboration and strategic planning on key animal health issues facing the Caribbean region. For more information visit: <https://www.caribvet.net/meetings-conferences/caribvet-meetings/governance-and-coordination/5th-caribvet-general-assembly>

The week culminated with the 24th CARICOM Chief Veterinary Officers Meeting on April 25th and 26th. This separate meeting allowed the CVOs from CARICOM member states to discuss animal health issues specific to their integration efforts. For more information visit: <https://caricom.org/veterinarians-at-forefront-of-25-by-2025-initiative/>



CARIBBEAN PLANT HEALTH TAKES CENTER STAGE IN SUCCESSFUL WEBINAR TO RECOGNIZE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLANT HEALTH (IDPH)

On May 15th, 2024, the Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) Forum joined forces with the APHIS IS Trinidad Office to host a resounding bilingual webinar celebrating International Day of Plant Health (IDPH). Entitled "A Conversation on Regional Priority Pests and the Concept of Plant Health in One Health," the webinar focused on issues pertinent to the Caribbean and Latin America, drawing over 65 stakeholders and partners to the virtual discussion.

The event featured presentations by esteemed experts. Dr. Peta Gaye Chang, representing Jamaica's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, delved into the recent arrival of the Tomato Brown Rugose Virus, a new threat to the region's tomato and pepper crops. Dr. Alain Ratnadass of CIRAD Plant Protection Centre in Reunion offered a compelling exploration of "The relevance of crop plant health within the One Health Concept," highlighting the interconnectedness of animal, human, environmental, and plant health.

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This webinar marked the beginning of a collaborative series of bilingual technical webinars planned by IS Trinidad and the CPHD. These initiatives aim to bolster critical strategic areas identified for the region, including safeguarding plant resources, implementing early warning systems for pest threats, strengthening emergency response capabilities, and fostering robust networking and resource sharing among Caribbean nations. Overall, the successful webinar served as a catalyst for heightened awareness and collaboration on the pressing plant health challenges facing the Caribbean.

SPECIAL FEATURE

THE CARIBBEAN PEST DIAGNOSTIC NETWORK (CPDN) - PROTECTING THE CARIBBEAN'S AGRICULTURAL FUTURE

The Caribbean Pest Diagnostic Network (CPDN) is a crucial initiative aimed at safeguarding the region's agricultural sector from the devastating impacts of invasive pests and diseases. By providing a coordinated approach to pest identification and management, the CPDN plays a vital role in protecting food security and economic stability.

The CPDN operates as both a network and an online platform, facilitating collaboration among plant inspectors, scouts, consultants, extension personnel, and diagnosticians. Through this digital ecosystem, field data and digital images can be shared and analyzed rapidly, enabling swift pest identification and informed decision-making.

Key functions of the CPDN include:

- **Rapid Diagnosis:** Leveraging expert knowledge and advanced technology, the CPDN enables quick and accurate identification of pests and diseases.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The network promotes collaboration and information exchange among experts, fostering innovation and best practices.
- **Early Warning System:** By monitoring pest populations and detecting new threats, the CPDN helps prevent outbreaks and minimize their impact.
- **Capacity Building:** The CPDN supports training and capacity development to strengthen pest management skills across the region.

Benefits of the CPDN

The CPDN offers numerous benefits to the Caribbean region, including:

- **Protection of crops and livelihoods:** By preventing the spread of pests and diseases, the CPDN safeguards agricultural production and the livelihoods of farmers.
- **Facilitation of trade:** Accurate pest identification and reporting are essential for meeting international phytosanitary standards, enabling smooth trade of agricultural products.
- **Improved food security:** By ensuring a stable and sustainable food supply, the CPDN contributes to food security and nutrition in the region.

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- **Environmental protection:** The CPDN helps to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem health by managing invasive species.

Challenges and Future Directions

While the CPDN has made significant strides, challenges remain, including resource constraints, limited diagnostic capacity in some countries, and the emergence of new pests and diseases. To address these challenges, ongoing efforts are focused on expanding the network's reach, enhancing diagnostic capabilities, and staying ahead of evolving threats.

The CPDN is a critical component of the Caribbean's plant health strategy. By investing in this initiative, the region can build a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector.



BUILDING A STRONGER CARIBBEAN PLANT HEALTH SHIELD: SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL MEETING HELD IN MIAMI

The CPHD and APHIS IS joined forces with the Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative (GCSI) to host its Annual Regional Partnership and Steering Committee Meeting. Held from May 21st to 23rd, 2024, at the USDA Miami Plant Inspection Station (PIS), this longstanding initiative brought together key players in plant health across the Greater Caribbean Region.

Representatives from organizations including CAHFSA, FAO, OIRSA, USDA (PPQ, IS, and S&T), CARDI, CIRAD, IICA, and CPHD leadership participated in this productive event. Some of the meeting's key accomplishments included:

- **CPHD Strategic Plan Update:** A critical review and update of the CPHD's 5-Year Strategic Work Plan ensured continued alignment with regional goals. New targets and activities were identified to achieve the plan's objectives.
- **GCSI Operational Plan Input:** Stakeholder insights were incorporated into the development of the GCSI 2025-2026 Operational Plan, ensuring its effectiveness.
- **Joint Agenda Development:** A collaborative effort resulted in focused and relevant agendas for the 17th Annual CPHD Meeting and the IPPC Regional Workshop.



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• **Revamped Technical Working Groups:** A new framework was designed to strengthen the CPHD Technical Working Groups, improving alignment with regional needs, resources, and priorities.

To further enhance the meeting's impact, participants were offered a tour of the PIS facilities. This provided valuable insights into USDA's plant material inspection processes, led by Joey Saad, Area South Assistant Port Director. Additionally, Louis Volpe, Assistant Director PPQ-PEIP-POP, delivered a presentation on the USDA Preclearance Programme, highlighting its benefits and operations.

This collaborative approach to regional work plan development and resource allocation fosters a stronger and more prepared Greater Caribbean Region, ultimately safeguarding plant health for the future.



ALERT: TOP 10 PRIORITY PESTS THAT POSE SIGNIFICANT RISK TO THE CARIBBEAN

The 5th Meeting of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) Regional Priority Pest List (RPPL) Working Group, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from August 14th to 16th, 2024, was a collaborative effort led by APHIS IS Trinidad, CABI, and CAHFSA. This Technical Working Group (TWG) plays a critical role in scientifically and objectively identifying and prioritizing quarantine pests posing a threat to the Caribbean region.



The TWG comprises of experts within the region in the fields of Entomology; Crop Pathology (Bacteriology, Mycology, Virology) Nematology, Malacology, Acarology, Weed Sciences and Plant Quarantine. To ensure a robust and data-driven process, a blended approach was utilized with pre-meeting analysis by experts of;

- The prioritized list of quarantine pests from a minimum of (9) nine CARICOM Members states
- Horizon scanning to identify potential invasive pests based on trade flows and risk factors
- Utilizing AI-powered search engines
- Consulting RPPO pest alerts, lists, and databases
- Analyzing the OIRSA region's priority regulated pests
- Leveraging CABI's suite of tools for horizon scanning, IAS compendium, and pest risk analysis (PRA)

Pests identified from the process outlined above was analyzed using (where applicable) a pest risk analysis tool to assess risk potential scores, then the OPEP Model to obtain the (unmitigated) impact percentages. Only pests with the highest impact potential percentage ($\geq 70\%$), were short listed for further ranking / prioritization using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) which examine parameters such as invasiveness; economic, social and environmental impact.



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This comprehensive approach resulted in the identification of the Top 10 Priority Pests for the Caribbean (*see table with pests ranked in order of priority*). Notably, the group also recognized the Top 4 Pests of Mutual Concern shared by both the Caribbean and the United States, as identified when cross-referenced against the USDA's OPEP 2024 results (<https://pestlens.info/>).

Pest #1: <i>Ceratitis capitata</i> (diptera)
Pest #2: <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> fsp cubens TR4
Pest #3: <i>Trogoderma granarium</i> (khapra beetle)
Pest #4: <i>Drosophila suzukii</i>
Pest #5: <i>Dickeya dadantii</i> (Bacterial Wilt & Soft Rot of Ornamentals & Potato)
Pest #6: <i>Bursaphelenchus cocophilus</i> (Red ring nematode)
Pest #7: Tomato brown rugose fruit virus
Pest #8: Asian bean thrips, <i>Megalurothrips usitatus</i> Bagnall
Pest #9: <i>Candidatus Phytoplasma aculeata</i> , LETHAL BRONZING DISEASE
Pest #10: Maize lethal necrosis disease (virus)

The CPHD Top 10 Pest of Priority for the Caribbean Region - 2024

The output of this Working Group instructs / informs the attention, resources, and activities of the CPHD and its regional partners with respect to the design and implementation of regional pest exclusion and monitoring activities such as surveillance programs, capacity building, regional emergency action plans, simulation exercises, regional pest risk analysis – all within the context of finite resources.



STRENGTHENING CARIBBEAN PLANT HEALTH GOVERNANCE: KEY OUTCOMES OF THE 17TH CPHD AND 2024 IPPC REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The Seventeenth (17th) Meeting of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) Forum and 2024 International Plant Convention (IPPC) Regional Workshop for the Caribbean was held from August 26-30, 2024, in Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting focused on strengthening Caribbean plant health governance by establishing a new governance structure with four panels: Pest Prevention and Risk Management, Preparedness and Response, Phytosanitary Measures and Trade Facilitation, and Communications and Outreach.



Other key topics discussed included:

- **Fusarium Tropical Race 4 (TR4):** The IPPC Secretariat's global coordination efforts for prevention, preparedness, and response to this disease.

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- **Caribbean Plant Diagnostics Network (CPDN):** Renewal of the MoU with the University of Florida for free, rapid distance digital diagnostics.
- **IPPC Development Agenda Item (DAI):** Strengthening Pest Outbreak Alert and Response Systems (POARS).
- **Regional Multi-Agency Coordination:** Incident Command System for plant health emergencies.
- **Invasive Alien Species:** Risk assessment for Barbados and the OECS.
- **Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluations:** Latest developments.
- **Mediterranean Fly:** Detection and management in the Dominican Republic.
- **CARICOM's 25 by 25 Initiative:** Reducing the region's food import bill and improving food security.

For presentations and more visit: [CPHD 17th Annual Meeting](#) (login required)



STRENGTHENING REGIONAL FOC TR4 RESPONSE THROUGH FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS

The CPHD Musa Technical Working Group in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (Barbados and Rome Offices), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Food Security and Rural Development, St Lucia, and APHIS IS Trinidad and Tobago successfully conducted its inaugural Training of Trainers (ToT) and Farmer Field School (FFS) initiative from September 2nd to 6th, 2024, at the Bay Gardens Marina Hotel, St. Lucia.

The workshop, titled "Enhancing Regional Preparedness for *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *ubense* Tropical Race 4 (Foc TR4) through Farmer Field School Approaches," was adapted to suit the Caribbean context from a highly successful TR4 FFS ToT program currently being implemented in Latin America.

This initiative aimed to equip Caribbean technicians with the knowledge and skills necessary to train farmers on Foc TR4 prevention, detection and biosecurity strategies.

Three specialist facilitators funded by FAO delivered the course content over the week. They were Dr. Luis Perez Vincente, INISAV, Cuba, Dr Jaime Cárdenas López, FAO, Columbia, and Dr Mónica Gallo, German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), Ecuador. In attendance were 21 regional participants from 10 countries.



The key outcomes include;

- Enhanced technical capacity: Participants gained valuable skills in Foc TR4 prevention, detection, and management.
- Developed national FFS initiatives: Participants are now poised to implement tailored FFS programs in their respective countries.
- Strengthened regional collaboration: The workshop fostered partnerships and knowledge sharing among Caribbean nations.

This successful training initiative was a significant step towards strengthening the region's capacity to prevent and manage Foc TR4, protecting the Caribbean's banana industry.



For presentations and more visit: [Enhancing Regional Preparedness Foc TR4 through Farmer Field School Approaches](#) (login required)

CPHD CHAIR HIGHLIGHTS REGIONAL VULNERABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF SAFE HUMANITARIAN AID AT CPM FOCUS GROUP MEETING

CPHD Chairman, Nelson Laville, the newly elected Chair of the CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and other Humanitarian Aid, expressed gratitude for international cooperation in ensuring safe humanitarian aid, at the first in-person meeting of the focus group in October 2024 in Bridgetown, Barbados since CPM-18.

Held for the first time in the Caribbean, Mr. Laville underscored the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Maria on Dominica and the region's susceptibility to natural disasters. He emphasized the critical need to prevent the introduction of invasive pests during disaster relief efforts and highlighted CAHFSA's role in developing an ISPM to address these risks.

The meeting featured participation from the Barbados Defense Force, the Barbados Department of Emergency Management, the FAO Subregional Office for Caribbean, the Chairman of the Emergency Response Technical Working Group of the CPHD, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

Throughout the week, the focus group worked on addressing comments from the IPPC community regarding the draft specification for a potential ISPM, which provides guidelines for managing the risk of plant pests in humanitarian aid. This draft is being prepared for presentation at CPM-19 in 2025.

CPHD PARTNERS WITH OIRSA TO CONDUCT A MAIZE LETHAL NECROSIS (MLN) STUDY TOUR IN MEXICO

Maize Lethal Necrosis (MLN), a highly destructive viral disease, has spread rapidly worldwide since its discovery in 2010. Co-infection by Maize Chlorotic Mottle Virus (Machlomovirus) and various Potyviridae viruses has resulted in devastating crop losses, particularly in regions with intensive maize cultivation.

While MLN is not currently present in the Caribbean (CPHD Member States), the potential risk of its entry and the catastrophic impact it could have on the region has led the CPHD Regional Priority Pest Listing Technical Working Group (RPPL TWG) identifying MLN as a top priority pest in both 2022 and 2024.

To enhance the Caribbean's capacity to prevent MLN, the CPHD Forum, in collaboration with the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), and the Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA), organized a study tour to Mexico from November 10th to 15th, 2024.

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The group visited key Mexican institutions specializing in MLN surveillance, diagnosis, and management, including the National Service of Agri-Food Health, Safety and Quality (SENASICA), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and the Autonomous University of Chapingo (UACH).

This valuable initiative significantly improved the technical capacity of the five participating CPHD member states. By learning from esteemed experts and observing cutting-edge methodologies, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of MLN's biology, epidemiology, and management strategies in Mexico.

The mission was not only a scientific and technical endeavor but also a deeply enriching cultural experience, highlighting the significance of corn in Mexican society. The exemplary coordination and facilitation provided by all the visited institutions ensured well-prepared and engaging visits. The warm hospitality extended to the delegation further enhanced the experience.

Delegation members expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity to build strong regional networks with OIRSA and Mexican institutions. These connections will foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint efforts to address shared plant health challenges.





Unified Fruit Fly Monitoring and Data Management in the Caribbean Region 2024



Alies van Sauers-Muller¹, Renita Sewsaran², Avenesh Ali³.

¹ Chair Fruit Fly Technical Working Group, Damboentong 282, Saramacca, Suriname

² USDA-APHIS-IS, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad

³ Avenesh Ali, CPHD Web Developer, Palmiste, Trinidad

In a bid to fortify the Caribbean region against the detrimental effects of pests, the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD) has been at the forefront of developing and implementing robust pest exclusion and management strategies. Since its inception in 2007, the forum has diligently worked towards safeguarding the region's agriculture and biodiversity, with one of the initiatives being combating the spread of Tephritid fruit flies, known for their potential to cause significant economic damage.

Supported by the USDA Greater Caribbean Safeguarding Initiative, the CPHD has successfully marshaled a comprehensive approach towards the control and eradication of Fruit Flies. This collaboration also focuses on the importance of tourism and trade for the region, which, while beneficial, often facilitates the unwanted spread of pests.

A significant milestone was achieved between 2013 and the present, where 16 countries received extensive training in fruit fly surveillance and management techniques. These sessions covered critical areas such as identification, trapping, fruit collection, data management, and control methods, specifically targeting the *Anastrepha obliqua* and *Anastrepha suspensa*.

In 2014, the introduction of the Fruit Fly Monitoring System (FFMS) marked a significant advancement in the region's fruit fly management capabilities.

The FFMS was developed to enable capture of the Fruit Fly Trapping data in a centralized database. The system is an online secure web database that allows users in their respective countries to enter data in this central online location.

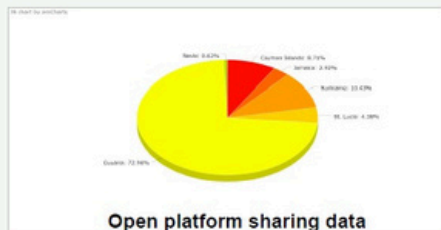
Since 2020, there has been a push to enhance regional transparency based on the need for greater intraregional trade with countries being encouraged to share their data via the FFMS Open Sharing Platform. The FFMS Open Share currently displays data on trapping and usage in the 6 participating countries with the expectation that FTD data will be shared soon, thus allowing for countries to take preemptive measures in safeguarding their agriculture for themselves and neighboring countries.

COUNTRY USAGE (AS AT 17 MAY 2024)

Country	Last Entry Month	Imports Recorded to Date
Belize	August 2017	848
Barbados	August 2012	5
British Virgin Islands	September 2014	1
Cayman Islands	May 2024	22783
Curacao	October 2016	2
Guyana	March 2024	9029
Jamaica	July 2022	232
Haiti	May 2021	202
St. Kitts	March 2024	2785
St. Lucia	April 2024	7732
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	November 2020	4728
Suriname	April 2024	7598
Trinidad and Tobago	July 2018	1427
Trinidad and Tobago	November 2022	7194

COUNTRY SHARING DATA (AS AT 17 MAY 2024)

Country	Trapping Data to Date
Belize	755
Barbados	2
British Virgin Islands	108
Cayman Islands	7623
Curacao	1
Guyana	3445
Jamaica	4103
Haiti	8764
St. Kitts	992
St. Lucia	28
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	193
Suriname	3217
Trinidad and Tobago	1283
Suriname	8383
Trinidad and Tobago	1563
Trinidad and Tobago	206



The strength of the system and its data collection and analysis, and proposed transparency, helps provide the data required to support successful Caribbean exports with extra regional partners, due to the phytosanitary requirements that importing countries necessitate on imported goods. This in turn, benefits the economy of exporting countries in the Caribbean region.



Map of country with traps

Fruit Fly Monitoring System Poster as created for Tephritid Workers of the Western Hemisphere (TWWH) - Jamaica

Jornada de expertos sobre el Bunchy Top del Banano (BBTV)



Mónica Betancourt
Investigadora Ph.D de Agrosavia en Colombia.

PONENCIAS

- La relación entre la transmisión vectorial y las mejores prácticas de erradicación y manejo, caso BBTV.
- Avances en el estudio de materiales resistentes a BBTV.



Luis Pérez Vicente
Investigador Ph.D de INISAV en Cuba.

PONENCIAS

- La enfermedad del cogollo arracimado (banana bunchy top disease) de los bananos y plátanos: I. síntomas, impacto, distribución, epidemiología y antecedentes de su manejo.
- La enfermedad del cogollo arracimado (banana bunchy top disease) de los bananos y plátanos: II. Banana bunchy top nanovirus, diagnóstico, vigilancia y prevención.



María Rebeca Peña
Maestra Emérita del Instituto Politécnico Nacional de México.

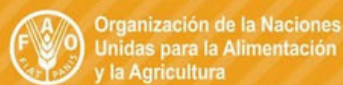
PONENCIA

- Áfidos o pulgones (Hemiptera: Aphididae) como vectores de virus.

Miércoles, 5 de febrero de 2025

9:00 horas México / Centroamérica
10:00 horas Panamá / 11:00 horas República Dominicana

 [YouTube https://bit.ly/CanalOIRSAoficial](https://bit.ly/CanalOIRSAoficial)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCES

- » February 24th - 28th - CPHD 3rd Musa TWG Meeting
- » March 17th – 21st - 19th Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM-19)
- » March 24th – 28th CCCVO Meeting - Trinidad and Tobago
- » April 22nd - World Earth Day
- » May 12th - International Day of Plant Health (IDPH)
- » May 22nd - International Biodiversity Day
- » June 5th World Environment Day
- » June 6 - World Pest Day
- » June 7 - World Food Safety Day
- » June 30th - July 4th - CPM Focus Group on Safe Provision of Food and Other Humanitarian Aid (Tentative)
- » September 26 - World Environment Health Day
- » October 16th World Food Day
- » October 24th - International Day of Climate Action
- » December 5th - World Soil Day

*Don't forget you can highlight your events via the CPHD Forum's website or the newsletter.
Email details to the CPHD Secretariat: secretariat@cphdforum.org*



NOTABLE READS

»» **FAO Celebrates its 80th Anniversary**

[80th anniversary](#) | [World Food Day](#) | [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

»» **New Director for FAO Plant Production and Protection Appointed**

The IPPC welcomes Yurdi Yasmi as the new Director for the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division, appointed by the FAO Director-General.

[News](#) | [Plant Production and Protection](#) | [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

»» **Intensify Efforts Against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Spread – Veterinarians Advise Region**

[Intensify efforts against Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza spread – veterinarians advise Region – CARICOM](#)

»» **Webinar series explores ways to strengthen capacity on international movement of seeds**

[Webinar series explores ways to strengthen capacity on international movement of seeds – CABI Blog](#)

»» **CPM 19 – 2025**

[CPM 19 - 2025 - International Plant Protection Convention](#)

About the CPHD

The Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD) is a collaboration of National Plant Health Services, Regional and International Organizations, Government Entities, Universities and Reference Laboratories with the common purpose of:

1. Safeguarding the plant resources of the Caribbean from the threat of quarantine pests
2. Improving plant health through the control and management of existing pests
3. Contributing to the expansion of production and facilitation of safe trade of agricultural commodities

in order to:

- a) increase food security
- b) protect the unique environment
- c) enhance the quality of life and economic wellbeing of the people of the countries and territories of the Greater Caribbean Region.

The CPHD is the Technical Committee of the Caribbean Regional Plant Protection Organisation (RPPO)

Ongoing CPHD Initiatives in 2024

- Training and ongoing surveillance of priority pests of mutual concern to the US and Caribbean Region. eg TR4 and Tuta absoluta
- Promotion of CPHD digital tools including the FFMS, CBIS, and PEST-Caribbean and adoption of these border management tools into national work programmes.
- Review of 5-year Work Plan and Strategic Pillars
- Promotion of CPHD website and Facebook page as the regional hub for plant health knowledge
- Promotion of CPDN website and free access to rapid digital diagnostics for an additional 2 years.
- Regional Pest Prioritization Exercise – Updated Regional Priority Pest List (2024-2026)
- Establishment of a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Mechanism for Incident Command Systems (ICS) for Plant Health (PH) Emergencies in the Caribbean
- Continuous dissemination of timely and relevant technical plant health information through a series of webinars



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