



Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes

CIHEAM BARI

press release

17 March 2023

Kick-off of SOS research project: Development of Sustainable Control Strategies against *Philaenus spumarius* and Interference with *Xylella fastidiosa* Transmission, 22 March, 9.30am, at Ciheam Bari's Cosimo Lacirignola Campus

Developing strategies for the sustainable control of the spittlebug (*Philaenus spumarius*) and identifying its role in *Xylella fastidiosa* transmission are the main focus of the SOS project, set to be launched on 22 March at 9.30 am at CIHEAM Bari's Cosimo Lacirignola campus.

Philaenus spumarius is the main vector of *Xylella fastidiosa* bacterium, the most destructive pest affecting olive industry in Puglia. When the adult insect sucks the crude sap of an infected plant, it acquires the bacterium that will be retained throughout its life cycle. When it lands on a new plant for feeding, it injects the bacterium, thus spreading the disease.

To date, little is still known about the interactions between the insect, the bacterium and the olive tree, and this prevents the development of an effective and sustainable control strategy that could enable the rehabilitation of affected areas.

How can we limit the development of this insect vector? In what way do farming landscape, climate and agronomic management impact its proliferation? Is it possible to contain the spread of *Xylella fastidiosa* by using alternative methods to conventional pesticides, not only to safeguard the olive trees and reduce production losses, but also to protect the agro-ecosystem? Here are some of the questions that the SOS project will seek to answer over the next 36 months.

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Ufficio Stampa

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The SOS project - Developing Sustainable Control Strategies against *Philaenus spumarius* and Interference with Transmission of *Xylella fastidiosa* - (funded by M.D. 419161 of 13/09/2022 (MASAF) CUP: D23C22001020001), coordinated by the Department of Agricultural, Forestry and Food Science (DISAFA) of Turin University will be carried out jointly with CIHEAM Bari and the University of Foggia (Department of Agricultural Sciences, Food, Natural Resources and Engineering - UNIFG-DAFNE), the University of Bari (Department of Soil, Plant and Food Sciences - UNIBA-DISSPA) and the University of Padua (Department of Agronomy, Food, Natural Resources, Animals and Environment - UNIPD-DAFNAE).

The SOS Project kick-off meeting, which will be hosted at CIHEAM Bari's Cosimo Lacirignola Campus on 22 March at 9.30 a.m., will be opened by **Maurizio Raeli**, director of the Italian Institute of CIHEAM, and by the delegates from Puglia Region, **Donato Pentassuglia**, Councillor for Agriculture, **Gianluca Nardone**, Director of the Department of Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Development, and **Salvatore Infantino**, Plant Health Observatory Executive. **Domenico Bosco**, full professor at the University of Turin, will introduce the SOS project. The meeting will then move on with technical round tables with the participation of the project partners.

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