



Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes

CIHEAM BARI

P r e s s r e l e a s e

21 June 2023

High-level meeting on the management strategy of transboundary plant pests and diseases in NENA region

CIHEAM Bari, 21-23 June

The Italian Institute of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM Bari) is hosting the High-level Meeting on the management strategy of transboundary plant pests and diseases in NENA region. The event, which will end on June 23, is organised in collaboration with FAO and Regione Puglia.

The spread of transboundary plant pests and diseases is a significant threat to agriculture and the environment, particularly in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region. These pests can cause crop damage, reduce food production, and endanger food security. They can also have a negative impact on the natural environment, by affecting ecosystems and threatening biodiversity.

The High-Level Meeting on the management strategy of transboundary plant pests and diseases in NENA region is bringing together scholars, experts, representatives from CIHEAM, FAO, Regione Puglia, and leading scientific and academic institutions in the region. The main objective is to promote international collaboration as an essential driver to reduce the risk of transboundary plant pests and diseases, protect the environment and ensure rapid responses to food system threats.

CIHEAM Bari, in close collaboration with FAO and Regione Puglia, has already established a strong partnership in the management of transboundary diseases, such as *Xylella fastidiosa* and red palm weevil; it is also working on the development of IT systems for satellite detection and field geolocalisation of infected plants, using innovative apps such as XylAppNENA. The Italian headquarters of CIHEAM also collaborates closely with Regione Puglia on quarantine pest control programmes, plant pest management, diagnostics, and control. In fact, each year, some 80,000 olive trees are tested for *Xylella* and their health. Furthermore, CIHEAM Bari is developing, in collaboration with the University of Bari and the Italian Research Council, some cutting-edge control systems on *Xylella* using research already established in the medical field. These efforts are funded by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture.

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Participants at the international conference include, for CIHEAM Bari, Maurizio Raeli, Director, Biagio Di Terlizzi, Deputy Director; for FAO, Abdulhakim Elwaer, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative in Cairo, Xya Jingyuan, Director of Plant Production and Protection Division, Thaer Yaseen, Regional Plant Protection Officer; for Regione Puglia, Gianluca Nardone, Director of the Department of Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Development, Salvatore Infantino, Head of the Phytosanitary Service; Mohamed Habib Ben Jamaa, Executive Director of the Near East Plant Protection Organization; senior representatives from Albania, Algeria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Mauritania, Tunisia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Yemen; for the Italian Research Council, Donato Boscia, Director of the Research Division of Bari office; representatives from the University of Bari and students from the Integrated Pest Management of Fruit and Vegetable Crops Course at CIHEAM Bari. The conference is an important opportunity to share scientific knowledge, discuss management strategies, and collaborate to jointly address the challenges posed by transboundary plant pests and diseases in the NENA region. CIHEAM Bari, together with its international partners, is committed to protecting the environment, promoting food security, and supporting the sustainable development of agriculture in the region.

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