



Netherlands Food and Consumer  
Product Safety Authority  
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and  
Innovation

**Recommendations from the QBOL-EPPO Conference on DNA barcoding  
and diagnostic methods for plant pests  
Haarlem, NL, 2012-05-21/25**

*To all those who are concerned about phytosanitary security in particular NPPOs, policy makers, research funders and providers etc.*

The rate of introduction of plant pests has increased steadily during recent decades mainly as a result of the globalization of the trade in agricultural and horticultural plants and products. These introductions threaten food security and some pests have resulted in huge economic, environmental or social impacts in the EPPO countries.

The capability to quickly and reliably detect and identify these organisms is critical for effective phytosanitary measures to be taken and for ensure safe movement of plants and plant products in the context of increasing trade and travel. Laboratories are increasingly working under quality assurance systems (including accreditation) and need to have access to validated tests.

In order to ensure proper development, validation and effective and reliable use of tests, the Conference considered it is essential that the infrastructure in Plant Health is strengthened in particular that:

- Expertise in taxonomy and phytosanitary science is secured.
- Maintenance of reference collections is ensured and accessibility and links are developed further.
- Easy accessible databases containing reliable data are maintained and developed further.
- Phytosanitary research (including research on taxonomy) continues in particular for diagnostic test development.

The Conference highlighted that sampling methodology prior to testing was also critical and recommended that this should be given more attention.

The Conference considered that it is essential that the development of harmonized diagnostic protocols continues.

The Conference welcomed the achievements of the EU project QBOL and recommended that further validation should be organized to ensure that an EPPO protocol on barcoding can be adopted as soon as possible. The consequences of continuing evolution in diagnostic techniques and taxonomy on phytosanitary regulations should be considered further.