Joint EFSA/EPPO Workshop
'Data collection and information sharing in plant health'
Parma, IT, 2014-04-01/03

- Workshop conclusions -

Session 1 – Advanced methods and strategies for surveillance and data collection
Harmonised guidelines on surveillance (random/targeting, general/monitoring) are needed.
A comprehensive inventory of survey methods for quarantine pests will be available soon (outcome of the EFSA Perseus project).
As resources are limited, it is necessary to increase the efficiency of surveys (e.g. optimise survey design, maximise survey performance to minimise costs).
The availability of advanced methods/strategies for surveillance and reporting can increase survey efficiency (e.g. web-based traps/automated spore trapping/mobile tools for data collection).
Surveillance networks for pesticides and unregulated/common plant pests are examples that may be used for quarantine pests.
Interaction between databases is a challenging issue.

Session 2 – Modelling tools to forecast pest distributions, emergence and invasion patterns
Pathway modelling on pest entry also highlights "what we don't know".
Increased insights on pest biology can result in control cost savings.
Open databases on climate, crops and pest distributions (e.g. crop and yield forecasting systems) are useful.
As access to quality geo-referenced pest occurrence data is limited, there is a need for a common geo-referenced database which could be used in plant pest modelling.
A comprehensive review of quantitative models for spread of plant pests can provide a decision support system for PRA modelling.
Pest risk assessment methodology should be better linked to sound basic ecology.

Session 3 – Data collection and information sharing for PRA
PRA aims to protect the territory and provides evidence to risk managers, which should be fit for purpose.
Communication of PRA outcome is important.
Research is needed to back up PRAs.
Evidence and uncertainties should be evaluated and presented carefully during PRA.
PRA is interdisciplinary and different impacts need to be evaluated (economic, environmental, social).
Prioritisation for PRAs needs to involve stakeholders.

Session 4 – Early warning tools in plant health

Early warning is essential in plant health. Currently, it is mainly based on data mining done by plant health experts.

It is important to identify drivers for emerging risks as well as the risks themselves.

News tools for data collection such as citizen science and media monitoring are available and should continue to be explored.

It is essential to keep a critical eye on data collected (both on quality and appropriate analysis). Presentation of data to the users is important.

Data collection for early warning helps in identifying what is needed for PRAs and in fine tuning phytosanitary actions.

Session 5 – Pest reporting, databases and information exchange systems

Information from pest reports can be sensitive and may be owned.

What is found (and confidence in negative results) depends partly on efforts spent in looking and the ease of finding the pest concerned.

International or regional standards should be used whenever possible (e.g. report pest status according to ISPM 8, use EPPO codes for pest/plant names).

Appropriate connections between people (who and how) are crucial in making phytosanitary action happen.

Information needs to flow in both directions (sender, receiver), as feedback is needed.

It is often better to start with simple information systems and then make them evolve.

The use of tools for mobile devices should be further explored.