



Report on Plant Health Activities by IICA during 2024 in the Northern, Central, Caribbean, Andean and Southern Regions.



March 2025



1. Introduction.

IICA manages its technical cooperation model through 7 hemispheric action programs, focused on Innovation and Bioeconomy, Territorial Development and Family Agriculture, International Trade and Regional Integration, Climate Action and Agricultural Sustainability, **Agricultural Health, Safety and Agrifood Quality Program - AHFS**, Agrifood Digitalization; and Gender and Youth Equity.

The objective of Agricultural Health, Safety and Quality of Agri-Food is to promote a productive, competitive and sustainable agricultural sector that provides safe food through local, regional and global markets, by generating, improving and applying agricultural health, food safety and quality policies.

AHFS Program action lines focus on:

- Strengthening and modernizing capacities in food health, safety and quality.
- Promoting the effective implementation of international standards.
- Adopt good practices and improve the response to emergency situations

To implement these lines of action, the Program is organized into 4 Pillars: Animal Health, Plant Health, Food Safety and Quality, and Safe Trade and Agro-Food Security through the Application of Sanitary Measures. Transversally to these pillars, the Operationalization of the One Health approach is organized as a comprehensive and unifying strategy that seeks harmonized and coordinated Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), as well as networking.

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2. Main actions 2024 related to plant health.

2.1. In relation to strengthening and modernizing capacities in animal and plant health, food safety and quality:

Supporting and promoting the implementation of the One Health concept

IICA has worked following the One Health approach since its formal establishment 20 years ago. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, hemispheric actions and calls for action and implementation increased, highlighting its importance for the transformation of the agri-food system, a message that IICA raised at the World Summit on Food Systems. Regional projects were also carried out, such as the one implemented in the Andean Region, whose objective is to identify common intersectoral and regional priority work areas, for which workshops, conferences and publications were held.

Currently, the AHFS Program has an action plan for the operationalization of One Health in the Americas. This plan seeks to balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It has three main objectives: to promote inter-ministerial policies, promote initiatives in rural communities and advocate for investment and financing of the One Health approach. To achieve these objectives, three implementation phases were defined: research, action and collaboration. The phases involve evaluation of the approach's management, training, execution of pilot plans, and strengthening of relationships with donors and strategic partners. During the month of April, an international seminar on Animal Health and its contribution to the transformation of food systems in the Americas was held in Paraguay, within the framework of the contribution of animal health to one health.

In October 2024, the first meeting of the Permanent Working Group on One Health in Agri-Food Systems was held in San José, Costa Rica, attended by more than 30 specialists in the areas of agriculture, animal health, plant health, environment, and public health.

The document "One Health in the Americas: The importance of inter-institutional collaboration in the hemisphere and its rural communities" was published. This document aims to advance the "One



Health” approach in the Americas, prioritizing rural areas through the IICA Continental Alliance. During the regional event, a survey was conducted among representatives from 34 countries, collecting information on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of "One Health", which integrates human, animal and environmental health. <https://hdl.handle.net/11324/23020>.

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Support to the Inter-American Coordinating Group in Plant Protection – GICSV.

GICSV Members are the Regional Plant Protection Organizations - RPPO of the Americas, the North American Plant Protection Organization - NAPPO, the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health - OIRSA, the Caribbean Agriculture Health and Food Safety Agency - CAHFSA, the Andean Community - CAN and the Committee for Plant Health of the South - COSAVE. GICSV, created in 1999, promotes effective and common actions to prevent the introduction and spread of pests in plants and their products and promotes appropriate measures for their control and operating regulations.

OIRSA has coordinated GICSV since March 2023 and until March 2025. Its operating regulations were recently updated. IICA acts as technical secretary, contributing to the achievement of the objectives and promoting quality technical cooperation.

GICSV establishes Working Groups (WG) on topics that are considered strategic for the Americas. To date, priority has been given to groups on HLB, FOCR4T, Fruit Fly, Orthoptera Pest, Electronic Certification, and *Tuta absoluta*. A 7th WG on Phytosanitary Risk and Emergency Management has recently been created. The main actions and products for the year 2024 are summarized:

- Coordinating Committee (CC) and the Working Groups (WG) Work Program was updated. The Coordinating Committee and the WGs hold regular meetings to monitor their work plans.
- Horizontal cooperation was promoted between the RPPOs that make up GICSV, as well as between the NPPOs.
- “Reference guide for the surveillance and control of *Tuta absoluta* in the American region” soon to be published in Spanish and English.
- Analysis of the survey results and on this basis prepare a document aimed at identifying improvements to the ePhyto system. To establish contact points.
- Exchange of information on the current situation of the countries in the implementation of ePhyto identified and sharing main problems.
- Session by the Locust Technical Group during the phytosanitary Seminar of Mérida-Yucatán Mexico, exchanging information on the locust situation at a national level, referring to countries with an official work system on this type of pest.
- Information was exchanged regarding the current situation of Huanglongbing (HLB) by region.
- The IPPC Guide of the International Plant Protection Convention on Pest-Free Areas was analyzed within the framework of the technical group on fruit flies.
- A technical webinar on fruit flies was held, where the experiences with *Ceratitidis capitata* and *Anastrepha fraterculus* in Ecuador were analyzed, with more than 180 participants.
- In the technical group on phytosanitary emergencies, an update was made on the work being carried out at the IPPC with respect to the POARS.
- Exchange of information on new developments, by each RPPO, regarding the FOC R4T situation in the area.

More information: <https://apps.iica.int/GICSV/programas/SanidadVegetal/default.aspx>



PROCINORTE. Cooperative Program in Agricultural Research and Technology,

PROCINORTE is a regional mechanism that facilitates cooperative research activities of trilateral interest to Canada, Mexico and the United States. IICA leads PROCINORTE as executive secretary. PROCINORTE has a working group focused on plant health.

PROCINORTE has organized annual workshops such as the one organized on the occasion of the International Day of Plant Health in 2024 on "Fostering Agro-Ecosystem Resilience Utilizing Biological Control of Pests" and the Workshop: "Tools and Technologies for Managing Plant Parasitic Nematodes in North American Horticultural Crops"

More information: <https://www.procinorte.net/estrategic/plant-health/>

Cooperation Agreement between IICA and COSAVE to strengthen COSAVE's actions.

The objective is to provide technical and management support for the best fulfillment of the specific functions and purposes of COSAVE, as well as the strengthening of regional integration and in general the development of integrated actions, aimed at resolving issues inherent to agricultural biosecurity of common interest to COSAVE member countries.

During 2024, priority has been given to actions related to supporting initiatives related to greater public-private interaction within the scope of COSAVE, facilitating the process of modernization and strengthening of COSAVE's institutionalidad, promoting innovation and adoption of technology, reviewing the processes and Regional Standards on Plant Protection - ERPF, Regional Virtual School on Phytosanitary Inspection - ERVIF, starting a new training cohort for 2025, bioinputs / biopreparations, preparing an induction course for Cosave. An alignment workshop on Antimicrobial Resistance in Plant Health within the framework of One Health was held in September 2024. These topics are part of an Annual Operating Plan that has been implemented throughout the year. Support was provided for the realization of the "Seminars to disseminate actions and tools available for monitoring and management of the *Dalbulus maidis*, Tucumán, Argentina, with successful results.

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Supporting Plant Health Systems Enhancement through the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum Annual Meeting.

The Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD) in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (USDA/APHIS), the Greater Caribbean Safeguard Initiative (GCSI), the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) jointly held the 17th Annual Meeting of the CPHD Forum and the International Plant Protection Commission (IPPC) regional workshop in August 2024 in Trinidad and Tobago. The meetings focused on the standardization of regional plant health agendas and operations, with an emphasis on technical and emerging issues beneficial to the regional plant health system.

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Strengthening the sanitary and phytosanitary regulatory framework in CARIFORUM

In collaboration with the European Union and the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA), under the 11th EDF SPS Measures project IICA hosted an advocacy workshop for the Regional Agricultural Health and Food Safety (AHFS) Policy and Action Plan which was endorsed by the Ministers of Agriculture of the Caribbean Region (April). Through the actions of the workshop a strategy to effect action for the implementation of the Regional and National AHFS Policies was drafted. At the end of the workshop the twenty senior professionals from 10 countries attended

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IICA-ALADI inter-institutional cooperation for regulatory convergence in Latin America to implement equivalence agreements in sanitary and phytosanitary measures

In November, at IICA's headquarters in Costa Rica, more than 20 representatives of official sanitary, phytosanitary and food safety services participated in a workshop to strengthen countries' capacity to understand and implement equivalence agreements for sanitary and phytosanitary measures, facilitating global and regional trade in agrifood products. The workshop sought to facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned among participating countries, analyze the challenges and opportunities to improve processes, strengthen international cooperation and facilitate global and regional trade, with the objective of avoiding excessive regulatory diversity and promoting convergence. Work was also done to complement the information provided in the survey conducted in June of this year to learn about the current situation, the interest and the limitations for the formation of equivalence agreements in the agrifood sector.

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Strengthening national phytosanitary systems

In terms of strengthening plant health in Saint Kitts and Nevis, the following actions were taken: IICA, in collaboration with the Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum (CPHD) under a project entitled "Supporting Pest Exclusion in the Caribbean: Efforts to Exclude TR4 in the Caribbean," USDA-APHIS and the Ministries of Agriculture acquired tissue culture seedlings of banana germplasm of the TR4-tolerant "Formosana" variety to evaluate their growth and productivity in five Caribbean countries: Dominica, Guyana, Suriname, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia. A tabletop simulation exercise was conducted for citrus canker (*Xanthomonas citri*) with the aim of strengthening the country's capacity and identifying gaps in border protection against pest incursions. Training for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices in St. Kitts and Nevis under an IUCN contract; knowledge and skills on the fundamentals of integrated pest management were increased among 120 farmers and technicians through 4 workshops.

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Maize lethal necrosis disease (MLN), Caribbean Plant Health Directors organized a training exercise on detection and response to Maize lethal necrosis disease (MLN), which was carried out in collaboration with OIRSA, in Mexico City, in November 2024 (five countries attended this training: Belize, Dominica, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname).

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The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), through funding from the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), with the participation of representatives from the public and private sectors of Belize and Honduras, held a meeting in June 2024 to share their experiences, benefits and challenges in the implementation of the pilot project of voluntary standards, for example, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and GlobalG.A.P., to meet access to export and national markets..

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In February 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries of Trinidad and Tobago received approved funding from IICA for a project entitled "Support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries (MALF) in the detection and diagnosis of plant pests and diseases to support the agricultural



sector and improve local food security.” funded with resources from the IICA Single Technical Cooperation Fund (SFTC) to upgrade and equip the MALF with specialized trained personnel to provide rapid and timely diagnostics of plant pests and diseases using molecular PCR technology. Twenty (20) MALF research technicians received increased diagnostic competence in theoretical and laboratory skills after a 2-week training program on “Plant Health Diagnostics: Protecting our Borders and Enhancing Food Security” from the University of the West Indies. This initiative has strengthened Trinidad and Tobago’s capacity to respond in a timely manner, such that more agricultural crop samples are being analyzed.

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In Argentina, the Inter-American Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) collaborated with technical agencies of the Argentine government in the prevention and control of the "corn leafhopper" disease *Dalbulus maidis*, which during the past 2023/24 campaign has spread in the plantations of that crop in the north and center of the country, causing severe economic losses and constituting a threat to food security. More information tomas.krotsch@iica.int

In Argentina, the Sixth Congress of Phytopathology “Advancing towards sustainability: Science for One Health” was held with an exhibition on Food Safety, plant health and One Health. This event defined 3 thematic axes: One Health in Phytopathology, Climate Change: effect on plants and pathogens and Food Safety.

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In Paraguay, the project “To the table with food from farms of small and medium producers organized in the Regional Center for Agricultural Marketing (CERCA)” held theoretical and practical training workshops on the Main Diseases in Tomato and Pepper Cultivation and their integrated management, aimed at producers who benefit from the Project.

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The project “Support for organic production and marketing of medicinal plants to improve income and quality of life of family farmers in Paraguay” with funding from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), conducted face-to-face training in 3 agricultural schools, and obtained more than 100 participants (total) including technicians, producer leaders, teachers from agricultural schools and university teachers. In addition, a training plan with a biological approach to phytosanitary management of mother plants and seedlings was designed and implemented, with the participation of 140 producers benefiting from the project, in 6 organizational committees in different parts of the country.

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An inter-institutional cooperation agreement was signed between SENAVE and IICA in Paraguay, dated September 2, 2024, establishing potential cooperation topics for the years 2024 to 2027. With the objective of strengthening technical capacities to improve the country's agricultural sector.

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En In Mexico, within the framework of the technical cooperation agreements between IICA and SENASICA, different operational programs are carried out that contribute to strengthening phytosanitary diagnosis and pest management activities.

The actions in plant health carried out during 2024 by IICA Mexico:

Execution of the SENASICA Operational Program (OP) Flies 2024, to detect and eradicate the transitory entries of the Mediterranean fruit fly *Ceratitis capitata* (Wiedemann) on the border of Mexico with Guatemala and in the national territory. Work was done to produce biological material from sterile flies of the genus *Anastrepha ludens* (bisexual and Tapachula 7), *Anastrepha obliqua*, as well as the production of the parasitoid *Diachasmimorpha longicaudata*, with acceptable quality according to



international standards, develop research actions, technology transfer and training for the improvement of its processes to assist with fruit fly control programs. The main activities of the staff that assisted in the PO were aimed at: Detecting and eradicating the entry of the Mediterranean fruit fly in the border areas with Guatemala, Implementation of emergency plans; average weekly production of 750 million pupae of sterile flies *Ceratitis capitata* (Wiedemann) for packaging and release, contributing to the decrease of the pressure of the pest. Average weekly production of pupae of sterile flies of the genus *Anastrepha ludens*: 20 million bisexual and 30 million strain Tapachula 7; of *Anastrepha obliqua* 10 million and 54 million pupae of the parasitoid *Diachasmimorpha longicaudata*.

Execution of the SENASICA 2024 Diagnostic Operational Program, with the aim of strengthening the technical, operational, and administrative capacity and phytosanitary epidemiological surveillance, phytosanitary diagnosis, field operations, phytosanitary services and attention to health contingencies of "SENASICA", through technical, legal and administrative cooperation, in order to guarantee surveillance and protection against phytosanitary risks, as well as the health and safety of agricultural, aquaculture and fishery products, including organic ones, in the national and international market. The personnel that assist in the PO helps to generate the development of technological methods for the biological control of agricultural pests, in the creation of technical-scientific reference documents to strengthen the phytosanitary actions of field personnel; performs phytosanitary diagnostic tests of plant products and by-products to prevent the introduction, dispersion or establishment of agricultural pests.

Other activities carried out in Mexico are:

- Support for the holding of the Second National Congress on Agri-Food Health and Safety. The event was held in August 2024, in Mexico City.
- Consulting to diagnose the organization and information system of the National Plant Health Advisory Council (CONACOFI). Development of a roadmap and strategic work plan, to appropriately contribute to the needs of the agricultural sector.
- Consulting for the development of an operational manual for the identification and management of risks on plant health and foodborne diseases in agricultural product markets in Mexico and its application through a pilot exercise.
- Support for the training project on the Producing with Safety platform.

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2.2. Promote the effective implementation of international standards.

- **Supported the organization of IPPC regional workshops for the Caribbean and Latin American regions (2024).**

El IICA is working in collaboration with IPPC, FAO, CAHFSA, CAN, COSAVE and OIRSA to plan the IPPC Regional Workshops for the Caribbean and Latin America that seek to promote the participation of Caribbean and Latin American countries in IPPC standard-setting processes and encourage compliance with international phytosanitary standards. The Caribbean workshop succeeded in providing a platform for increased participation in the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and offered the Caribbean Community valuable information on the operations and objectives of the IPPC. The joint meeting with the 17th Annual Meeting of the CPHD Forum also covered reports on international and regional decisions and recommendations on safeguarding plant health, updates from the CPHD Forum technical working groups and partners, as well as current initiatives to strengthen and address phytosanitary systems in the Caribbean. On the other hand, more than 50 plant health professionals from 17 countries and 6 regional/international organizations attended the Latin American workshop that was held in a hybrid format at the Institute for the Protection and Health of Plants (IPSA) Headquarters, Managua, Nicaragua, for the Latin American Region. This workshop



included a technical visit to learn about the dragon fruit (*Hylocereus* spp.) production system under a systems approach within the framework of ISPM 14.

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In commemoration of the “International Day of Plant Health”, IICA prepared a declaration jointly with GICSV and its regional organizations (NAPPO, CAHFSA, OIRSA, CAN and COSAVE) in support of the celebration of this day in a collaborative approach to One Health. Messages were designed by GICSV and shared through its social networks.

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2.3. In relation to adopting good practices and improving the response to emergency situations:

- **Prepare the Caribbean to safeguard its borders against priority plant pests.**

To strengthen National Plant Protection Organizations to prevent/manage key priority plant pests in the Caribbean, a number of capacity building activities were undertaken.

Build an effective safeguarding continuum in the Great Caribbean Region by supporting the regional pest prioritization exercise - Determination of pests of mutual interest for the Caribbean and the US. The Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum RPPL Technical Working Group held its fifth meeting in August 2024, Trinidad and Tobago, with the overall objective of identifying and prioritizing quarantine pests for the Caribbean in a scientific and objective manner. Priority pests for the Caribbean in order of importance are:

Pest No. 1: *Ceratitis capitata* (Diptera)

Pest No. 2: *Fusarium oxysporum* fsp cubens TR4

Pest No. 3: *Trogoderma granarium* (Khapra beetle)

Pest No. 4: *Drosophila suzukii*

Pest No. 5: *Dickeya dadantii* (bacterial wilt and soft rot of ornamental plants and potatoes)

Pest No. 6: *Bursaphelenchus cocophilus* (red ring nematode)

Pest No. 7: Tomato brown rugose virus

Pest No. 8: Asian bean thrips, *Megalurothrips usitatus* Bagnall

Pest No. 9: Candidatus *Phytoplasma aculeata* (lethal bronzing disease of

Pest No.10: Maize lethal necrosis disease MLN (virus)

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- **Establishment of an Expert Committee on *Tuta (Phthorimaea) absoluta*.**

A training workshop entitled “The Regional Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Mechanism for Incident Command Systems (ICS)” was held in Trinidad and Tobago. Fifteen plant health professionals who are part of the expert committee attended the workshop. Based on the knowledge gained during the training on the implementation of a Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) System within the framework of the Incident Command System (ICS), guidelines/frameworks were developed to implement a regional coordinated response system for the tomato leaf miner.



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- **Development of BPA Audit Course and Manual (2nd Edition) to improve trade of fresh products in the Caribbean.**

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Audit Course. Technical supervision was provided to complete the e-course content and GAP audit manual. The second edition of the course was successfully conducted with over 100 extension agents, field officers, producers and other agricultural stakeholders participating.

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- **Strengthened capacity of public and private sector stakeholders in sanitary and phytosanitary measures (risk communication).**

In collaboration with Ohio State University (OSU) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), two interactive webinars (3 hours each) on risk communication were held (June 2024): “Fundamentals of Risk Perception and Communication in Food Safety and Antimicrobial Resistance” and “Practical Implementation of Risk Communication Principles: Real-World Scenarios,” covering animal and plant health cases. Sixty-five participants from 13 countries attended the seminars; 38 people attended both seminars and received certificates.

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- ***Fusarium oxysporum f.sp. cubense tropical race 4 (Foc TR4)***

Management of tropical race 4 and other musaceae diseases in the Caribbean.

The Caribbean Plant Health Directors Forum organized a Regional Tropical Race 4 Diagnostic and Surveillance Workshop in Jamaica in April 2024. The workshop aimed to educate and raise awareness about Moko, TR4, BBTv and BBrMV, their symptoms, transmission and impact on Musaceae. It provided practical experience in detection techniques, sampling and surveillance strategies. Countries used the model survey plan to develop surveillance plans for a priority banana disease.

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ALER4TA Project, Capacity building and biosecurity in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru, against *Fusarium oxysporum* tropical race 4 (Foc R4T) in musaceae

It was developed jointly with GIZ in the Andean Region. In this project, work was done with the RPPO of the Andean Community - CAN, with the NPPOs and with the INIAs of the 4 countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, on biosecurity issues of Foc R4T.

Regional meetings were held on analysis methodologies (laboratory), a cabinet simulation for standardization of regional protocols with the CAN, cabinet simulations in each of the countries and capacity building for musaceae producers in each of the countries with the ECA methodology (field schools). 4,095 people were trained, of which: 1,157 were women.

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Support to the GICSV FOC R4T Working Group

As a forum for analysis and coordination of the Regional Plant Protection Organizations - ORPF - of the Americas to coordinate actions, address and disseminate the most relevant aspects to have a hemispheric strategy. <http://apps.iica.int/GICSV/default.aspx>



Support for the Global Alliance against R4T

The Global Alliance against TR4T's efforts focus on prevention and training, genetic improvement and control methods. Learn more about the Global Alliance against TR4T. More information <https://iica.int/es/global-alliance>

IICA Network on Musaceae - *Fusarium oxysporum* Race 4 Tropical (Foc R4T)

Created with the aim of contributing to knowledge management and the development of joint, articulated and synergistic actions supporting the efforts of member countries to combat *Fusarium oxysporum* Tropical Race 4 (Foc R4T) in musaceae. More information erika.soto@iica.int