

Protect the plants – protect life

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International Year of Plant Health – 2020

According to FAO data, the number of hungry people worldwide is increasing by 1 billion every 10 years, and every year pests in agriculture and forestry destroy up to 40% of the potential crop yield and cause economic losses amounting to 220 billion US dollars.

Climate change and human activities deteriorate ecosystems and reduce biodiversity. On the other hand, the tripling of international movement of people and trade over the last decade provides a pathway for the spread of pests across the globe, causing major damage to local plants and the environment. Plant health is increasingly under threat!

For these and other reasons, the UN General Assembly declared 2020 the International Year of Plant Health.

National information campaign under the patronage of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry

Objectives of the campaign:

- To raise awareness among the public and the political class about plant health and its importance for sustainable agriculture, environmental protection and the promotion of economic and trade development.
- To encourage efforts to protect plant health in the context of increasing trade, climate change and new pest risks.

To protect and safeguard plants from pests would mean:

- Reducing the costs of dealing with emergency plant pest outbreaks.
- Avoiding the devastating impact of pests on agriculture, livelihoods and food security – all of us can play a role in this protection.

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Plant health:

Plants are at the basis of life. We owe them 80% of the food we consume and 98% of the oxygen we breathe.

... But do we ever think about their health?!

The emergence and spread of dangerous pests put plant health at risk by killing plants, consuming our food and destroying the environment.

What are pests?

Viruses, fungi, insects, nematodes, bacteria, invasive plants and others. Priority pests for the countries of the European Union:

- pine wood nematode
- *Xylella fastidiosa*

What can be done?

- To apply integrated pest management as an ecosystem-based approach, relying on minimal use of pesticides, with the aim of protecting the environment, pollinators, beneficial organisms, humans and animals;
- Be careful when transporting plants and plant products across borders, because pests may be hiding in them;
- Make trade in plants and plant products safe by complying with phytosanitary standards;
- Contact plant protection inspectors at the Regional Food Safety Directorates to find out what you can do legally.
- **do not endanger pollinating bees**
- **comply with import restrictions into the eu**
- **do not underestimate wooden packaging material**

Expected results of the awareness-raising campaign at the level of:

- **Control authority** – improved communication between phytosanitary control authorities, the public and other stakeholders;
- **Science** – development and implementation of new technologies for the study of pests and methods of controlling them;
- **Plant protection industry** – development and application of sustainable and flexible models for controlling plant pests;
- **Environment** – will provide greater clarity and predictability regarding the status of local populations and their sensitivity to new species;

- **Population** – will obtain a clear vision of the policies and actions of the competent authorities and the need to show solidarity with them.