September 2015

To European Nurseries: **ENA statement about *Xylella fastidiosa***

The European Nurserystock Association (ENA) is aware of the first findings in Europe of plants infected by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* and legal measures adopted by the European Commission and some member states.

ENA would like to remind all European nurseries that plant health is the most important asset we have, overall and also individually as a nursery.

ENA is strongly in favor of the robust measures adopted by the EC to avoid the import of infected plants into the European countries, and would like to advise those countries not members of the European Union to adopt them as well. ENA also encourages the EU to adopt any reasonable and proportionate measure to prevent the spread of this disease within the EU but, at the same time, we are against any additional measure implemented by EU Member States preventing the free circulation of goods within the EU without strong scientific evidence.

ENA has also a great concern on the spread of other pests and diseases in several countries: the polyphagous pests of many ornamental tree species *Anoplophora glabripennis* and *Anoplophora chinensis*, the fungus *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus* (*Chalara fraxinea*) disease of *Fraxinus*, the new fungus disease caused by *Phytophthora lateralis* on *Chamaecyparis*, the threat of emerald ash borer *Agrilus planipennis*, the bacteria *Erwinia amylovora* in new European countries and regions and the fungal disease caused by *Cryphonectria parasitica* on *Castanea sativa*.

As the spread of quarantine diseases is a great risk and danger for both the environmental and agricultural systems in all European countries, ENA demands from the EU significant high funding that will allow 1) rapid reaction against the first detections including compensation for owners if eradication measures must be taken and 2) start or enhance R&D projects to prevent and fight against those pests and diseases.

While we are confident that European nurseries are working at a high plant health standards and according to the regulations, we'd like to note that we have less and less Plant Protection Products available, the medicines for plants, and that keeps live plant nurseries (minor non-edible crops) without tools to fight against harmful organisms or their vectors. We agree increasing control is necessary to ensure plant health but we also ask the EU authorities to quickly and easily have Plant Protection Products registered in European countries for non-edible minor crops like nurseries; live plants are

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considered a major pathway to spread pests and diseases but, at the same time, have very low availability of authorized Plant Protection Products.

Although ENA is not against the imports of plants from third countries, we consider that the entry of large numbers of plants for commercial purposes in the EU significantly increases the risk of introducing serious pests and diseases. EC should ensure that all Member States work to the same plant health standards. There is a concern that if just one Member State has a weak policing of its import controls then that country will simply become the one through which harmful organisms could be imported. In order to avoid unfair concurrence of imports from third countries and to achieve reciprocity in trade relations, it is necessary to establish the reverse strategy in Community phytosanitary policy, harmonizing and enhancing import controls. W**e also need the implication of European plant importers to minimize the risks.**

We believe the nurseries in the European areas affected by *Xylella fastidiosa* are the most interested in eradicating it. Italy is handling the problem and is free of the disease with the exception of the Demarcated Areas, where they are already implementing the measures agreed by the EU. We believe is absolutely necessary, to have success fighting against this disease, **to never hesitate to quickly eradicate the affected plants and to increase the economic contribution of all authorities involved. The disease is now confined within the Demarcated Areas and the rest of the EU nurseries don't have to be alarmed, just be aware of the disease and continue working at the highest standards of plant health control.**

Finally ENA asks European politicians at all levels to not use pests and diseases as a political tool but to make policies to avoid the spread of pests and diseases and commit to helping those affected by them.

Yours sincerely,

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