

Croatia advises Kosovo on Fire Blight control

The Ministry of Agriculture visited its Croatian counterpart in the search for ways to control Fire Blight

The coordination group of MAFRD responsible for establishing the control of Fire Blight in Kosovo visited Croatia from 3 - 7 June 2009 at the invitation of Croatia's Ministry of Agriculture. The purpose was to find out how the Croatian Government organised itself to combat the highly infectious disease of *Erwinia amylovora* or Fire Blight that, if left unchecked, can devastate the whole of Kosovo's apple and pear industry.



Lessons learned

Some of the important elements that the team found out about are described below:

1. Administrative instructions from the government include:

i) Eradication of healthy saplings in nurseries within a diameter of 10 metres of an infection;

ii) Eradication of the entire nursery if 30% of the saplings are infected. The delivering and selling of planting materials is not permitted till 25th October of present year in such areas;

iii) Prohibition on the sale from the mother plants for 2 years if the infection is detected.

2. International obligation (for candidate states of the EU)

i) Development of annual activities and programmes for the proper management of quarantine diseases (eg Fire Blight);

ii) Information on the above to all plant protection organizations - especially EPPO;

iii) Decrease of border entry points dedicated for import/export of planting material - and the provision of effective staff and equipment.



3. Plant protection institute mandate:

i) Field sample collection and laboratory analysis;

ii) Instalment of prognosis system by providing equipment in multiple locations (in Croatia 152), collection of data from the field and delivery to the inspectorate;

iii) Fire blight detection using four methods have been used in laboratory conditions: King B, PCR, Molecular and DNA.

It is thought that the lessons learnt from the study tour will be quickly fed into the Ministry's planning for such a facility to combat infectious diseases in Kosovo.

The study tour was hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Croatia, organised by the Fire Blight Coordination Group of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Kosovo, and financed by the Swiss and Danish governments through HPK.

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