



# Plant Production and Protection Newsletter

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## Foreword

Dear readers,

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Plant Production and Protection Newsletter. The first half of 2021 has been exciting for the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) community as we carried out activities to disseminate our annual theme: “Enhancing food security and nutrition”.

NSP’s work has been recognized at the highest levels through participation in the Pre-Summit to the United Nations Food Systems

Summit (UNFSS) and the inclusion of good practices in pesticide management and farmer field schools on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SGD) website. The First NSP Seminar and the NSP Mid-Year Meeting for 2021 also marked important steps to continue realizing the vision of One Dynamic NSP.

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest in the *Plant Production and Protection Newsletter!*

**Dr. Jingyuan Xia**

*Director, Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP)*

## Highlights

- The importance of plant production and protection was recognized in various **United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS)** Action Tracks and Food Systems Dialogues, where agroecology was highlighted as a key concept for inclusive food systems transformation. On 6 July, a UNFSS Science Days Side Event, “Transforming Food Systems through Agroecology” promoted the role of agroecology in fostering diversity in production, value chains and nutrition to improve resilience of farming and food systems. On 27 July, the Food Policy Forum for Change organized an affiliated event at the UNFSS Pre-Summit to demonstrate how agroecology works in practice and strengthen multi-stakeholder coalitions to transform food systems based on agroecological principles.
- **The first NSP Seminar** entitled “Transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable plant production and protection through optimization and minimization” was held virtually on 6 July 2021. The seminar is the first of a series, aiming at raising awareness of the contribution of plant production and protection to achieving SDGs, sharing information and knowledge on sustainable plant production and protection, and promoting thematic cross-cutting dialogue and collaboration.
- FAO kicked off preparations for the **Green Development of Seed Industry Conference**, to be held on 4-5 November 2021. On 12



*Green Development of Seed Industry Conference – First SAP meeting*

July, the Scientific Advisory Panel met for the first time, chaired by FAO Chief Scientist, while on 16 July, the first meeting of the Steering Committee took place under the chairing of Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General. The meetings set the ground for defining the conference themes and agenda through a participatory process.

- **The 2021 NSP Mid-Year Meeting** was held on 15 July. The NSP staff and broader community had a chance to meet virtually to reflect on achievements in the first semester of 2021, and plan for key activities in the second semester. This included facilitated group discussions, and keynote speeches by DDG Bechdol and Director Xia, who highlighted the importance of NPS’s contribution to the new FAO Strategic Framework and set a clear vision for One Dynamic NSP.

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## Transformation

- The **Transformative Partnership Platform (TPP)** on Agroecology and its partners held a virtual event on 15 July 2021 to discover how bold, context-specific policies can help transition to more sustainable and agroecological food systems.
- The **Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture took place virtually on 22–24 June 2021**. The 274 delegates and observers were welcomed by Mr Jingyuan Xia, NSP Director, who stressed the importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) in delivering Agenda 2030. PGRFA is especially important for improving people's nutritional status and increasing resilience in production systems.
- Six Sustainable Development Goals good practices on pesticide management and farmer field schools have been published on the **United Nations SDG website**. They cover the FAO Pesticide Registration Toolkit, a web-based tool for informed decision-making, the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Specifications (JMPS), and the farmer field school approach, highlighting the approach's role in gender and climate change resilience.

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## Actions

- Sixteen fixed-wing **drones** have been delivered to four Western Region countries with the support of the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO). The drones, custom-built by the HEMAV Foundation in collaboration with FAO, allow ground teams to enhance their locust survey operations. Along with delivery of the drones, CLCPRO trained fourteen field officers in Mauritania on drone operations and maintenance.
- The Rotterdam Convention Secretariat facilitated a 16-hour **technical assistance workshop** to strengthen capacities for Convention implementation in 20 countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. The event, conducted online and in Spanish, was attended by 100 officials from designated national authorities (DNAs) and took place between 8 June and 1 July 2021.

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## Partnerships

- The **Eighth World Congress on Conservation Agriculture (8WCCA)** was successfully held on 21–23 June 2021. Opening the 8WCCA, the Director-General of FAO, Mr Qu Dongyu, called for new solutions and smarter ways to produce more food with less, and stressed that without a healthy environment, there are no healthy foods. The three-day virtual Congress was organized by the European Conservation Agriculture Federation and SWISS NO-TILL with the technical support of FAO, including contributions from the NSP director and NSP staff in plenary and parallel sessions.
- FAO and the International Fertilizer Association (IFA) presented a second webinar, **“Fertigation: A tool to simultaneously improve water and nutrient use efficiency”**, on 13 July 2021 as part of the Sustainable Plant Nutrition Webinar series. Following a successful first [event on microbials](#), this webinar focused on fertigation, a technique that entails applying liquid or water-soluble fertilizer to plants through irrigation systems.
- In collaboration with Promote Pollinators and under the framework of the ACP MEAs 3 programme, an **online seminar on pesticide policies and legislation** was held on 30 June. Presenters, panellists and participants shared examples of pesticide regulation, trends of use at national and regional levels, and explored scientific knowledge and gaps thereof on the impact of pesticides on pollinators.
- The publication *Climate change impacts on crops in Sri Lanka* is [available online](#). It was produced by NSP and the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB), in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture of Sri Lanka and the University of Peradeniya.

