

# News highlights from the Americas and the Caribbean



 September 9, 2025

## Advancing sustainable agriculture: CABI BioProtection Portal highlighted at rural pharmacies event in Brazil

The **CABI BioProtection Portal** – the largest open-access global resource for registered biocontrol and biopesticide products and

information – has been highlighted at a rural pharmacies event in Brasília, Brazil.

The term 'Rural pharmacy' refers to the concept of broadening the availability of registered and recommended plant protection products – both chemical and biological – for crops that traditionally lack sufficient regulatory support.

The event – entitled '**Rural Pharmacy: Advances, Challenges, and Priorities for Minor Crops**,' and organized by the Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil (CNA) – focused on key themes, including innovation, regulatory harmonization, Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs), and regional prioritization of phytosanitary needs.

### Important role in food security and marketing

Attendees from 15 countries exchanged experiences, challenges, and solutions for expanding plant protection technologies to minor crops, which represent a significant portion of Brazilian and Latin American agricultural production and play an important role in food security and marketing.

It also emphasized the importance of international cooperation, scientific data generation, and capacity building to support sustainable agriculture and food safety.

Read more [here](#)



 September 4, 2025

## CABI strengthens regional collaboration in Latin America to help advance sustainable agriculture and food security

CABI has been busy working to strengthen regional collaboration in Latin America, helping to advance sustainable agricultural

production and food security, including the development of more environmentally friendly methods to combat crop pests and diseases.

**Dr Yelitza Colmenarez**, CABI's Centre Director, Brazil, took part in the Second Regional Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation in Agri-Food Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, where she promoted CABI's work in the region.


At the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) headquarters in Vázquez de Coronado, San José, Costa Rica, the event focused on creating a strategic action plan for science, technology, and innovation (STI) in agriculture and food systems across the Americas.

### Opportunity to discuss potential collaboration

This provided Dr Colmenarez with the opportunity to discuss potential collaboration with the Cooperative Program for the Development of Agri-Food and Agro-Industrial Technology in the Southern Cone (PROCISUR), which contributes to fostering collaborative research and development among Southern Cone countries.

Read more [here](#)



 July 7, 2025

## Supporting Chilean potato farmers through safer and smarter crop protection

A new biopesticides project, supported by the **Croda Foundation**, has launched in Chile and is already making an impact. Focused on potato farming in remote areas of the country, the project combines on-the-ground training with digital tools. It aims to improve crop

protection practices, boost sustainability, and strengthen farmers' knowledge.

### Practical training meets digital tools

Over the three-year initiative, CABI and partners aim to equip Chilean potato farmers and advisors with practical knowledge and resources to tackle common and regional challenges. This includes:

- Enhancing understanding of safe pesticide use
- Introducing biopesticides as alternatives to chemical inputs
- Providing access to reliable digital information

During a recent visit, CABI held five workshops across three targeted regions, two in the south of Chile and one in the north. These sessions brought together around 130 farmers and agricultural advisors for hands-on learning experiences. Each workshop featured presentations, sprayer calibration demos, Q&A sessions, and live demonstrations of how to use the CABI BioProtection Portal and the enfermedadespapa digital platforms.

Read more [here](#)





June 26, 2025

## Public and private sector partnership seeks to increase sustainable potato production in Chile

CABI is working with the **Agricultural Research Institute** (INIA) in Chile and the **Croda Foundation** to help increase sustainable

potato production of the crop including supporting 300 smallholder farmers reduce their reliance on chemical pesticides.

The three-year project will enable Chile's smallholder potato farmers develop more sustainable livelihoods through nature-based biological pesticides – incorporating existing biopesticides as well as investigating new biological solutions.

As part of the project activities a technical visit took place in Chiloé Island involving partners where an update was given on efforts to reach 160 farmers in the first year of the project. This included efforts to train farmers and technicians on the use of nature-based solutions, the application of bioproducts and good agricultural practices.

In attendance was **Dr Yelitza Colmenarez**, CABI's Centre Director, Brazil, Executive Director of Croda Foundation, Rommel Moseley, INIA's Specialists Jean Franco Castro (Coordinator of the project in Chile); Maria Teresa Pino (International Affairs Division-INIA), INIA Remehue Director, Manuel Muñoz David, Sub-Director, Carlos Salas and Senior Researcher, Ivette Acuña.

Read more [here](#)



June 16, 2025

## CABI works in partnership to step up the fight against invasive Croton scale pest in Grenada

CABI's **PlantwisePlus** programme is working with **Grenada's Ministry of Agriculture** and the **Sandals Foundation** to sustainably manage invasive Croton scale which can devastate the Caribbean country's mango, guava, plums, and soursop crops.

Soursop, for instance, is a valued crop in Grenada, a **Member Country** of CABI, which is used to produce ice cream as well as cakes, juices, smoothies and even tea and margaritas.

As part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for Croton scale (*Phalacroccoccus howertoni*), CABI has updated its partners on progress made on a range of biological control agents to control the pest which, if left to feed on crops, can lead to leaf yellowing, wilting, and premature leaf drop.

The Croton scale can also produce honeydew, a sticky sugary substance, which can contaminate fruits, leaves, and other parts of the plant, and supports the growth of sooty mold. Sooty mold can further reduce plant health by blocking photosynthesis.

Read more [here](#)



📅 June 12, 2025

## Managing the pathogens threatening St Helena's biodiversity and food security

The remote island of St Helena is a small speck in the vast South Atlantic Ocean, renowned for its rich history and isolation. It is the United Kingdom's second-oldest overseas territory, after Bermuda.

St Helena gained international fame as the place where Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled following his defeat in June 1815. He spent his final six years on the island until his death in 1821.

Despite its small size and remote location, St Helena continues to be an important link to the legacy of the old British Empire and a unique destination shaped by its dramatic history as well as its flora and fauna.

### Decline and death of the endemic trees of St Helena

A team of scientists from CABI have been working on the decline and death of the endemic trees of St Helena since 2022. The trees are believed to be living relicts, from a time millions of years ago, when lush, wet forests blanketed the island. Their closest relatives likely came from mainland Africa, but those species have long since gone extinct.

Read more [here](#)



📅 May 6, 2025

## CABI supports the efforts to fight invasive plant species in British Columbia, Canada


CABI is supporting the **Government of British Columbia** in Canada in their fight against a range of invasive plant species thanks to a funding boost of nearly CAD \$3 million aimed at protecting the Province's rich ecosystem and biodiversity.

The money is going toward groups, such as regional invasive species committees, local governments, environmental groups, researchers, and the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia, to continue collaboration and support of invasive plant programs and management actions.

Scientists from CABI's **Swiss Centre in Delémont** have a long history of investigating potential biocontrol agents for around 20 invasive plants mainly for the US and Canada, but also for Australia and South Africa, and will help support British Columbia as part of their Invasive Weed Biological Control Program.

Read more [here](#)



 April 4, 2025

## Empowering sustainable agriculture: CABI BioProtection Portal highlighted at Chilean national Fair

The **CABI BioProtection Portal** – the world's largest free resource for biological plant protection – has been highlighted at the Second

Technological Fair on Biological Control and the First Technological Fair on Bioinputs in Chile.

The event attracted over 400 participants, highlighting the increasing demand for information on biocontrol as part of sustainable agriculture practices. They included 74 industry professionals and representatives from eight sponsoring organizations, reflecting strong private-sector commitment to sustainability and innovation.

The Fair's collaborative spirit was further reinforced by three satellite events and the involvement of five partner organizations, including CABI. These activities fostered valuable knowledge exchange, strengthening regional efforts to promote eco-friendly agricultural practices.


### Eco-friendly pest control strategies

Scientists from CABI, including **Dr Yelitza Colmenarez**, Centre Director, Brazil, and **Dr Steve Edgington**, Biopesticides Team Leader, were on hand to talk about the benefits of the CABI BioProtection Portal at the event organized by **INIA-Chile**.

As sustainable agriculture gains momentum across Latin America, innovative solutions are empowering farmers to adopt eco-friendly pest control strategies.

Read more [here](#)



 July 3, 2024

## Webinar series investigates greater use of biopesticides to combat crop pests and diseases in Caribbean

CABI has facilitated a webinar series which investigated the prospect for greater utilization of biopesticides for combating potentially devastating crop pests and diseases affecting livelihoods and food security in the Caribbean.

The webinars followed a visit to Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago last year by **Dr Daniel Elger**, CABI CEO, to strengthen strategic partnerships.

Dr Elger's itinerary included productive dialogue with Ministries of Agriculture (MoAs) and other key stakeholders as well as visiting a **PlantwisePlus** plant clinic supporting smallholder farmers in Jamaica.

During the visit, a request was received for technical assistance to help CABI Member Countries in the region to increase the registration and availability of biopesticides for smallholder farmers.

Biopesticides provide a low risk and effective pest control alternative that deserve a simpler regulatory process for authorities and registrars alike. However, pesticide control boards and related authorities sometimes have insufficient information or capacity to introduce new processes for registering biopesticides.

The good news is that there are many international guidelines, tools, experts, regulatory models, and regional cooperation opportunities that can be utilized by countries to increase registration of these products.

Read more [here](#)



📅 November 28, 2024

## Biodiversity event celebrates 75 years of partnership between CABI and Canada for biological control research

Expertise and a renewed commitment to sustainable invasive pest and weed management has been shared at 'Biodiversity

Days' hosted by Dr Marcos Alvarez, Executive Director of the **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada** (AAFC) Pest Management Centre, and in his function of Canada's Liaison Officer to CABI.

The event was held in part to celebrate 75 years of scientific partnership between CABI and Canada for classical biological control.

**Dr Ulrich Kuhlmann**, CABI's Executive Director, Global Operations, attended the event organised by AAFC where he spoke about combined efforts using biodiversity to preserve Canada's rich biodiversity.

The two-day Biodiversity Days event in Ottawa covered an ambitious agenda that included a wide spectrum of topics – from policy to fundamental and applied research and different perspectives on preserving and preventing biodiversity loss.

Read more [here](#)



📅 November 18, 2024

## CABI supports project to help smallholder farmers fight the sweet potato weevil in Caribbean

CABI is supporting a project to help smallholder farmers fight the sweet potato weevil (SPW) in Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, and St Lucia using environmentally friendly biological control agents as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.

**Dr Belinda Luke**, Global Team Leader, PlantwisePlus, provided training with Dr Elizabeth Johnson, from the **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture** (IICA), to manage the pest which can cause up to 80 percent losses in yield.

The scientists focused on how to find strains of the most effective native entomopathogenic fungi (EPF) in the Caribbean islands for development and use as a biopesticide to augment biological control of sweet potato weevil (*Cylas puncticollis*).

### Delivered training in sweet potato trapping, culturing and selection

Dr Luke and Dr Johnson delivered training in sweet potato trapping, culturing and selection of infected SPW for shipping to CABI's laboratories in the UK for further analysis including identification.

The second phase later in the year will return the pure identified isolates of EPF from the SPW collected in the Caribbean. There will be further training in 2025, on conducting bioassays on the returned EPFs and selection of the most effective EPF isolates for development into biopesticides for the control of the SPW.

Read more [here](#)





📅 November 11, 2024

## Colombia visit serves to strengthen engagement with important Member Country for greater food security

A senior delegation of officials from CABI have paid a visit to Colombia – an important and valued **Member Country** – to strengthen engagement with national partners and enhance work towards improved livelihoods and greater food security.

**Dr Qiaoqiao Zhang**, Director, Memberships and **Dr Yelitza Colmenarez**, Centre Director, Brazil, chiefly met with senior counterparts from the **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development** and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** to update them on the progress in the implementation of CABI's **Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2025**.

This was in respect of work in partnership with CABI Member Countries and national partners and highlighted current collaboration and ways to further strengthen strategic partnerships between Colombia and CABI moving forward.

The work includes a range of impactful research and capacity-building projects jointly implemented by CABI and Colombian partners, as well as exploring opportunities to deepen collaboration between the relevant parties.

Read more [here](#)



📅 August 4, 2023

## 40th country Jamaica joins CABI BioProtection Portal

The **CABI BioProtection Portal** is now available in Jamaica to help local growers reduce reliance on chemical pesticides and produce safer and healthier food. Products on the site can fight a range of crop pests, such as the fall armyworm on maize, coffee berry borer on coffee and plantain weevil on coffee, more sustainably.


Jamaica, a **CABI Member Country**, becomes the 40th country to join the open-access tool which is helping thousands of users across the globe identify suitable biocontrol and biopesticide products to manage their plant pests and raise awareness about alternatives to chemical pesticides.

The recently re-launched faster and easier-to-use CABI BioProtection Portal includes 10 registered biocontrol and biopesticide products to tackle pests in Jamaica. These include the scarab beetle, vegetable weevil, two-spotted spider mite and citrus mealybug.

CABI's CEO **Dr Daniel Elger**, **Dr Qiaoqiao Zhang**, Memberships Director and **Mr Naitram (Bob) Ramnanan**, CABI's Regional Representative for the Caribbean Delegation, joined representatives of Jamaica's **Pesticide Control Authority**, its **Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining** (MAFM) and its Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) to celebrate the launch of the CABI BioProtection Portal at RADA in Jamaica on 17 July 2023.

Read more [here](#)



 July 31, 2023

## CABI visit to Caribbean strengthens strategic partnerships to help safeguard food security and biodiversity

**Dr Daniel Elger**, CABI's CEO, and **Dr Qiaoqiao Zhang**, Memberships Director, have completed a two-week visit to the

Caribbean, taking in three of CABI's 49 **Member Countries**, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, to strengthen strategic partnerships with stakeholders in the region.


Accompanied by Mr Naitram (Bob) Ramnanan, CABI's Regional Representative for the Caribbean, they met with a number of organizations to discuss work in partnership to safeguard food security and biodiversity in these three countries and the wider Caribbean region.

The CABI delegation had productive dialogue with Ministries of Agriculture (MoAs) and other key stakeholders including, the **Caribbean Agriculture Health and Food Safety Agency** (CAHFSA) of the **Caribbean Community** (CARICOM), the **Caribbean Agricultural Research & Development Institute** (CARDI) and the **Caribbean Biodiversity Fund**.

CABI Member Countries and other institutions were canvassed for support to create a Caribbean Invasive Alien Species Trust Fund (CIASF).

Read more [here](#)



 November 25, 2020

## CABI shares expertise on how to tackle citrus greening disease in the Caribbean

CABI scientists from Brazil, Costa Rica and Trinidad have teamed up with experts from **Fundecitrus** and the **University of São Paulo-ESALQ** to share their expertise on the debilitating citrus greening disease which threatens the success of citrus production – including

oranges, grapefruit, lemons and limes – in the Caribbean.

**Dr Yelitza Colmenarez** and **Naitram Ramnanan** took part in a series of webinars aimed at strengthening the capacity for the region to manage the citrus greening disease which is caused by a bacterium vectored by the citrus psyllid.

Once a tree bearing fruit is infected, the whole tree declines resulting in death. In São Paulo state alone, 20% of the 41.3 million trees become infected annually – meaning the loss of 44 million boxes of fruit (FUNDECITRUS, 2020).

Dr Colmenarez, Director CABI Brazil Centre and Regional Coordinator for the Plantwise Programme – Latin America and the Caribbean, said, "The disease and its vector are now confirmed in most countries of the Caribbean. From past experience it is only a matter of time that it will affect all citrus producing countries in the Caribbean."

Read more [here](#)