COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES
TWENTIETH SESSION
REPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY (EFSA)

EFSA Plant Health Activities – Annual Report 2025

1. Introduction

EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) is a European Union agency that provides independent scientific advice to support EU decision-making on risks related to the food and feed chain, animal health and plant health. EFSA does risk assessment, not risk management: it evaluates scientific evidence, while EU institutions and Member States decide measures based on that advice. Its work helps protect food safety, food security, agriculture, the environment and biodiversity within the EU.

More specifically, in Plant Health, EFSA assesses the risk posed by exotic plant pests (insects, mites, nematodes, bacteria, fungi, viruses, etc.) to plants, plant products and ecosystems in the EU.

- It performs pest categorisations, pest risk assessments and commodity risk assessments
- supports EU plant health legislation by providing the scientific basis for measures such as quarantine pest listing, import conditions or surveillance design and efforts optimisation.
- contributes to early warning and preparedness, through horizon scanning, surveillance tools and technical reports, host plant databases and communication material targeted to different public.

EFSA provides EU-level, independent scientific risk assessments on plant pests and emerging threats ensuring alignment with IPPC global phytosanitary standards and implementation frameworks. The EFSA pest and commodity risk assessments, the EFSA pest survey toolkit including pest survey cards and guidelines, the EFSA horizon scanning tools and databases are open access and can provide tools and information for plant health to all interested users.

2. Horizon Scanning & Early Warning Activities

EFSA continued to operate a large-scale horizon scanning system that monitors plant pest threats in a continuous manner, using the automated global tool EIOS managed by the joint

effort of WHO and JRC, through a text mining workflow integrating more than **26,000 keywords** and expert screening and validation.

2.1 Monthly Horizon Scanning Newsletters

Throughout 2025, EFSA produced monthly Horizon Scanning Newsletters summarizing new pest related signals identified from the web.

Across newsletters, EFSA monitored more than **3,500 plant pest species**, including EU regulated, emerging, and non-regulated ones. Screening is based on around **32,000 information sources** in **79 languages** , with expert evaluation applied to identify items of importance to the EU. For the most significant emerging pests each month—those not regulated in the EU or listed by EPPO—a rapid risk screening process (known as PeMo screening) is carried out, adding further detail to the newsletter content.

2.2 Horizon Scanning Methodology

Since the end of 2025 a dedicated EFSA working group—consisting of external experts, EFSA and ANSES staff—started revising the PeMo screening method, with the aim of developing an open access tool that external users can utilise to conduct their own national or local rapid risk screenings

.

2.3 EIOS Plant Health Community

2025 was also the year of the launch of the first community of EIOS dedicated to plant health. This initiative was born from the collaboration of EFSA and CABI together with the technical support of JRC. It offers a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge and information and is open to institutions dealing with phytosanitary risks from all over the world. The IPPC secretariat joined the community since its creation.

2.4 International Workshops on Horizon Scanning

In 2025, EFSA and ANSES jointly organised two significant workshops dedicated to horizon scanning for plant health, both hosted at the ANSES headquarters. The first workshop, held on 11-13 February 2025, was specifically tailored for risk managers. It focused on enhancing their understanding of horizon scanning practices, facilitating knowledge exchange, and strengthening risk prioritisation processes. Participants discussed best practices, operational challenges, and the integration of rapid risk screening into the decision-making workflow.

The second workshop took place from 2 to 4 December 2025 and concentrated on the topic of risk drivers. This session brought together experts to explore the underlying factors influencing emerging plant pest threats, such as climate change, global trade, and ecological shifts. The workshop provided a platform for collaborative discussion, aiming to identify actionable insights and future research needs to improve early warning capabilities.

3. Scientific Assessments and Risk Analysis

Risk Assessments EFSA continued to deliver scientific opinions and guidance on pest and commodity risk assessment, with particular attention to:

- new and emerging plant pests identified through horizon scanning or commodity risk assessment,
- risks linked to commodity pathways such as plants for planting, fruit, wood, and seeds
- quarantine priority pests under EU Regulation 2016/2031,

EFSA contributions to the **CPM20 Poster** highlight EFSA's alignment with IPPC standards and international collaboration frameworks.

4. Capacity Building and International Cooperation

4.1 Partnerships

EFSA maintains strong collaboration with EU, EU Member States , non-EU Countries (particularly with EU candidate and potential candidate countries), International Organisations working on plant health, such as FAO/IPPC, EPPO, CABI and global initiative on biodiversity inventories such as GBIF. The main focus of these partnerships are:

- exchange of expertise and work programmes,
- training programmes, webinars
- knowledge and data sharing networks.

These collaborations were frequently highlighted in EFSA's public communication materials.

4.2 Complementary activities: IPPC Plant Health Campus and EFSA EU Academy platform

CPM19 launched the digital IPPC Plant Health Campus, providing global training. EFSA also supports the NPPOs with open access webinars. For example. in plant health surveillance, EFSA has been hosting monthly webinars for priority pests and is developing a modular e-learning course on EU priority pest survey design, all accessible via EFSA's space on the EU Academy platform (access from: https://academy.europa.eu/courses/efsa-plant-pest-surveillance-toolkit).

4.3 Capacity building: contribution to the IPA countries Autumn Schools

EFSA significantly contributed to strengthening phytosanitary capacity in IPA (European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries) countries through the Autumn School trainings by providing targeted, hands-on education in plant health risk assessment. Through a combination of theoretical sessions, practical exercises, and case studies, EFSA experts helped early- to mid-career professionals improve their skills in pest and commodity risk assessment, while also fostering regional networking and alignment with IPPC and EU plant health standards.

5. Digital Innovation in Plant Health Systems

EFSA supported initiatives around:

- development of digital horizon scanning tools, and
- ontology and datasharing improvements (e.g., EIOS ontology discussions referenced in internal correspondence).-sharing improvements (e.g., EIOS ontology discussions referenced in internal correspondence).
- statistical tools used for pest survey design (Digital Toolkit for designing statistically sounds pest surveys RiBESS, RIPEST,
- Software to design and optimise multipest surveys at crop level (OptiPest)
- Tool for mapping pest distribution and performing climate suitability analysis based on Köppen-Geiger classification (SCAN-Clim)

These activities improve data harmonization, early warning accuracy, and cross-sector information exchange.

6. Engagement in EU and International Committees

EFSA coordinates the activities of

- **PLH Panel** and associated working groups, that through the adoption and publication of scientific opinions and related outputs:
    - Supported risk-based phytosanitary decision-making at EU level;
    - Focused on preventing the entry and spread of regulated plant pests;
    - Provided harmonised scientific evidence to underpin import requirements, pest listing, and surveillance priorities.

- **Two Networks,** consisting of EU member States, Norway and Switzerland and observers from the EU pre-accession countries that normally meet in Parma twice a year..

  - Plant Health Risk Assessment
  - Plant Health Surveillance

EFSA contributes to **PAFF Committee** discussions, providing horizon scanning updates and technical support (e.g., December 2025 Newsletter preparation). and presenting EFSA outputs on plant health risk assessment.

EFSA collaborates closely with EPPO by sharing work programmes and contributing to meetings and events.

7. Communication and Outreach

EFSA disseminated newsletters and participated in workshops.

EFSA's Plant Health activities in 2025 included:

- Open access publication of all EFSA plant health outputs (e.g. EFSA Journal, Zenodo platform, ESRI ArcGIS Story Maps)
- Preparation of monthly horizon scanning newsletters and dashboards to EU Member States and stakeholders,
- Preparation of monthly newsletters on the pest survey activities by EFSA to Member States and stakeholders
- Monthly webinars on the pest survey design of the 20 EU Priority pests by EFSA to Member States and stakeholders
- participation in international conferences, workshops (e.g., sea container risk mitigation, emerging pest preparedness),
- publication of scientific opinions, reports, posters, and educational materials.
- third consecutive year of the #planthealth4life campaign, reinforcing EFSA's commitment to raising awareness and promoting best practices for plant health across Europe.

8. Key Achievements in 2025

- Categorisation of new or emerging pests
- Risk assessment of plant commodities and update of the commodity risk assessment protocol
- Update of the EFSA General guidelines for the design of statistically sound and risk based survey

- Revised and optimised versions of the pest survey toolkit on the EFSA dedicated website R4EU (Ripest, OptiPest, survey Database etc.)
- Pest survey cards covering all EU Quarantine pests (by end 2026)
- Monitoring thousands of pest-related sources and provision of two international workshops on horizon scanning for plant pests where also IPPC secretariat was represented.
- Regular update of the *Xylella* host plant database, delivery of a global database on Scolytinae bark and ambrosia beetles, apple pests database, etc.

9. Outlook for 2026

Building on 2025 achievements, EFSA will continue to:

- deliver evidence-based risk assessment for the EU;
- strengthen cooperation with EU Member States and pre-accession countries, IPPC and EPPO;
- expand digital surveillance capabilities with the publication of a modular e-learning course for pest survey preparation and design
- support the development of commodity specific standards;
- strengthen international cooperation on emerging plant pests. In particular in 2026 EFSA will organise - in cooperation with EU research projects, international organisations, research and plant health institutions - the 5th European Conference on *Xylella fastidiosa*, 22-26 June in Bari (Italy) (https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/events/5th-european-conference-xylella-fastidiosa-science-sustainable-management);
- advance One Health approach for risk assessment and surveillance.