1. One of the key factors affecting under-supported NPPO’s is their status vis-à-vis the other two “sisters” of the SPS community within their national governments. Without any intention to belittle the importance of human health with regard to food safety, or animal health, it is nevertheless accepted that plant health is of less concern to national leadership in the overwhelming majority of countries. Specifically, the only time that plant health really takes the front page is only after a serious pest incursion has occurred (witness the dying olive trees in Italy, or Fall Army Worm in Africa).
2. As the IPPC Community moves toward the International Year of Plant Health, the leadership of NPPOs are being given a very good opportunity to raise their profile and possibly increase their resources within their national governments. This will not happen, however, if the leadership of those NPPOs do not have the tools to “make the pitch” or sell the idea of more support for protecting the health of plants.
3. What is needed is a well thought out global IYPH 2020 strategy to stress the importance and value of healthy plants to a nation. The idea being that supporting and increasing support to efforts to protect the health of plants contributes to the well-being of the population in any number of ways.
4. Such a strategy is not going to succeed, however, if the leadership of NPPOs around the world are not committed to the idea and willing to make the necessary adjustments to their approach to their jobs top achieve the goals. Such a strategy should be extremely comprehensive and could incorporate a number of tools, including:
5. Basic communication training on how to negotiate to persuade. Recognizing that most leaders of NPPOs should have this basic skill, it nevertheless should be reinforced one more time, and in the context of IYPH 2020 and protecting the health of plants
6. Simple, easy to understand, informational materials on the value of healthy plants and the role of an NPPO to support that value should be prepared and distributed by the IPPC Secretariat in coordination with the FAO Office of Communications. Simple and easy to understand because senior leadership does not have the time nor often takes the time to gain an in-depth appreciation of what the problem is and how to solve it. In addition, these types of materials can be used for public consumption to hep ensure that the general population is getting the same description of the problem as is the leadership of a country.
7. Enlist and engage the popular and social media to help send the message of protecting plant health. This means NPPO leadership approaching news agencies offering interviews and stories, using television as a tool. Working with IPPC to set a global media blitz, find a popular sports or entertainment personality in the country that can support the message and use them to do so.
8. Push to meet with senior national leadership on a regular basis to provide updates on IYPH, provide updates on plant health in the country and possible threats that require adequate preparation. Make the case for prevention, and make the case financially, emphasizing that prevention is significantly less costly than a cure. Push the IPPC Secretariat to generate those numbers and provide wide distribution, or make use of NPPO partners’ numbers if available.
9. Make sure your Minister attends CPM-15 and enthusiastically supports the adoption of the 2020 resolution and the work of the CPM.
10. *The bottom line is that preparation to make the effort, with the knowledge to support the argument and* using others with a better skill set or popularity to assist with making the argument, should be the most effective strategy to build the case for, and eventually receive, more resources for protecting plant health. As noted above, this cannot be done in a vacuum, but an NPPO should also enlist and encourage the IPPC Secretariat and FAO’s Office of Communications to develop and distribute any and all materials and basic training to help NPPOs make the argument for greater support for protecting the health of plants.
11. For any further query: ippc@fao.org
12. The SPG is invited to:
* *Note* the paper, and *provide comments* *and suggestions* for improvement.