

## **THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON MOLLUSCS**

### **OVERVIEW:**

The establishment of the technical working group (TWG) on the Giant African Snail was a decision of the Caribbean Plant Health Directors (CPHD) at their first meeting, convened at the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat Headquarters in George Town Guyana on April 23-25, 2008. This working group was to be one of five such groups established as an initial step in the formation of a regional network regarding plant health. The TWG name was changed from the TWG on Giant African Snail to the TWG on Molluscs, to incorporate all Molluscs of Economic Importance in 2010.

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE:**

To safeguard the Caribbean from threats and /or the impacts of introduction, economic damage, and spread of plant pests through investigation, research and the provision of advice on all matters related to Molluscs Pest.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

Where necessary the specific objectives (in no order of priority) should be to:

1. To investigate the biology and distribution of molluscs pests
2. Make recommendations to the Plant Health Directors Meeting for consideration of Molluscs Pests to be placed on national/regional priority pest lists
3. Conduct and disseminate pest risk analyses on Molluscs Pest.
4. Determine and recommend system(s) for prevention, surveillance, control and/or eradication of Molluscs Pests.
5. Determine the level of diagnostics required for detection [control or eradication].
6. Advise on surveillance and monitoring activities (national & regional)/projects/programmes required for Molluscs Pests to include a protocol for surveillance
7. Recommendations for training and building capacity
8. Recommend emergency preparedness for outbreaks if required
9. Advise on Public awareness with emphasis on community participation
10. Investigate/research new methods of prevention, spread, control, eradication
11. Address emerging issues.
12. Prepare discussion and scientific papers/publications when relevant

13. Assist with the development of notifications re WTO obligation upon request
14. Make recommendations on any issue (including ISPMs, etc.) concerning Molluscs Pest to the Caribbean Plant Health Directors to guide on discussion in the international, regional and national fora.
15. Report to the Meeting of Plant Health Directors
16. Verification and validation of information using international standards
17. Advise on synergies with other initiatives, programmes and projects
18. Advise on affiliations with other Groups, associations etc

**AFFECTED COUNTRIES:**

Antigua

Anguilla

St Lucia

Barbados

Dominica

Guadeloupe

Trinidad and Tobago

**IMPACT**

Giant African snails are already present in several Caribbean countries. In terms of environmental impact, the snails feed on indigenous vegetation and pose a conservation problem by altering habitat and out-competing other snails for food. For agriculture, they have become a destructive pest of crops and garden plants. To humans, they are vectors for disease, such as, eosinophilic meningitis, caused by the parasite rat lungworm that is passed to humans through eating raw or improperly cooked snails.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Antigua and Barbuda

Barbados

Anguilla

Dominica

St Lucia

Trinidad and Tobago

Martinique

Supporting Organizations: IICA, FAO, USDA APHIS GCSI, CAB International and CARICOM Sec.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:**

An Island Wide Survey for the Giant African Snail was completed for Suriname and Montserrat in 2012, by regional expert, Dr. Angela Fields. The results were negative for GAS.

**USEFUL LINKS:**

<http://idtools.org/id/mollusc/>

<http://caripestnetwork.org/>