

LETTER TO EDITOR

**Molecular evidence of the presence of whitefly species different from
Bemisia tabaci (Gennadius) in Cuba**

**Evidencia molecular de la presencia de especies de moscas blancas diferentes
de *Bemisia tabaci* en Cuba**

Dear Sir,

The ability of whiteflies to carry and spread disease is the widest impact they have had on global food production. In the tropics and subtropics, whiteflies have become one of the most serious crop protection problems. The genera *Bemisia* and *Trialeurodes* are the most important vectors of several hundred plant viruses (Begomovirus, Crinivirus, Ipomovirus, Torradovirus) that are responsible for severe crop losses.

The DNA fragments extracted from six different whiteflies samples were amplified with the primers C1-J2195/L2-N3014 to recognize the mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase gene, mtCOI. The obtained fragments were sequenced and analyzed with BLAST software (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>). Additionally, the phylogenetic analysis was performed and the tested samples compared with international sequences in GenBank.

The sequence of cytochrome oxidase gene of the specimens studied showed 96-99% homology with *Bemisia tabaci* (Gennadius), specifically for MEAM1 species, excepting in a sample collected from *Salvia officinalis* L., which showed 78-82% homology in this region with the species *Bemisia tuberculata* (Bondar) and *Trialeurodes abutilonea* (Haldeman), respectively, (No. Acceso AY057220 and AY057221). At present, we continue working with the accumulated results. To our knowledge, this study is the first molecular evidence of a whitefly species different from *B. tabaci* under natural conditions.

Sincerely yours,

Heidy González-Alvarez, Yamila Martínez-Zubiaur

National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), Apdo. 10, San José de las Lajas, Mayabeque, Cuba.
E-mail: hgonzalez@censa.edu.cu