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Biosecurity at banana farm level: the future way for reducing exotic disease risks

Bioseguridad a nivel de las fincas plataneras: el camino futuro para la reducción del riesgo de introducción de enfermedades exóticas

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Banana production in Latin America and the Caribbean (LA&C) is threatened by important endemic and exotic diseases caused by fungi (e.g., *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* tropical race 4, speckle by *Phyllosticta cavendishi*), wilts caused by prokaryotic agents (*Ralstonia solanacearum* bacterial wilt complex, *Xanthomonas musacearum*, *Dickeya* spp., banana wilt phytoplasm), and viral diseases (banana bunchy top virus, banana bract mosaic virus, banana streak virus, CMV, etc.). Prevention of introduction and dissemination of exotic pests to a given location is carried out at three levels: at pre-country borders, at country borders, and inside the country borders. The final and most important line of defense to reduce the threat imposed by exotic pest introduction is the development of contingency plans and implementation at farm level of biosecurity procedures based on good practices of prevention of introduction of diseases. In the present paper, the most important diseases threatening banana production in LA&C and their ways of dispersal are discussed, and it is proposed a program of biosecurity at farm level based on six basic measures to be adopted to reduce the risks of exotic disease introduction.