

# Global African swine fever Research Alliance GARA2022



CU-ID: 2248/v44e08

## Alianza Mundial para la Investigación de la peste porcina africana

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The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Global African swine fever Research Alliance (GARA 2022) was held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic (DR) from May 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

This global alliance, under the umbrella of STAR-IDAZ: Global Strategic Alliances for the Coordination of Research on the Major Infectious Diseases of Animals and Zoonoses, a joint initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), has as its mission "To establish and sustain global research partnerships that will generate scientific knowledge and tools to contribute to the successful prevention, control and, where feasible, eradication of African swine fever (ASF)". It is a coordinated global research partnership that enables the progressive control and eradication of African swine fever.

Cuba was represented with a large participation thanks to the support of CaribVET, which took into account Cuba's experience in the control and eradication of ASF on two occasions (1971 and 1980).

The World Conference in the Dominican Republic had a special connotation, as this country, together with Haiti, are the only countries on a common island, Hispaniola, in the American continent, affected by this dreaded and devastating swine disease. It is the most serious disease affecting pigs and seriously endangers the food safety and security of the countries infected.

The conference was attended by 160 scientists and decision makers from 39 countries, including all continents and geographical regions. Eminent scientists, who have dedicated their entire lives to study the epidemiology, characteristics of the virus, vaccine formulation and testing, among other topics, all related to ASF, were present and gave keynote lectures. Dr. Mary-Louise Penrith, Professor of Merit of the Uni-

versity of Pretoria, South Africa, and Dr. José Manuel Sánchez Vizcaíno, Professor of the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, were also present.

Among GARA's strategic objectives, 6 goals were identified:

- Goal 1. Identify research opportunities and facilitate collaborations within the Alliance.
- Goal 2. Conduct strategic and multidisciplinary research to better understand African swine fever.
- Goal 3. Determine the social and economic factors and the impact of African swine fever.
- Goal 4. Develop novel and improved tools to support African swine fever prevention and control.
- Goal 5. Determine the impact of ASF prevention and control tools.
- Goal 6. Serve as a gateway for communication and technology exchange for the global ASF research community and stakeholders.

The National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA) presented a poster on the lessons learned from the two ASF eradication campaigns in Cuba. It was also part of another poster presented by CaribVET on preparedness/training activities in the Caribbean region to face ASF threat.

The Cuban delegation shared the experiences acquired in other events, as well as Cuba's preparedness since the first outbreaks emerged in China under the leadership of the National Center for Animal Health (CENASA) to face a possible event.

GARA 2022 was a successful scientific meeting and an opportunity for participants to learn about the "State of the Art" of the results of ASF research worldwide, to exchange and also to learn about the challenges in dealing with this disease.

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Received: 13/07/2022

Accepted: 23/08/2022



**Figure 1.** Participants in the Global African swine fever Research Alliance, GARA 2022. / *Participantes en la Reunión Anual de la Alianza Mundial para la Investigación de la peste porcina africana, GARA 2022.*



a)



b)

**Figure 2.** a) Cuban delegation who participated in GARA 2022 event and b) CaribVET delegates. / *a) Delegación cubana que participó en el evento GARA 2022 y b) Delegados del CaribVET.*

**Conflict of interest:** The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

**Author contributions:** Drs. María T. Frías Lepoureau and María I. Percedo Abreu **presented a poster on lessons learned from African swine fever eradication campaigns in Cuba.** Drs. Carmen L. Perera González, Juliane Zulueta, Manuel Peláez Reyes, Pastor Alfonso Zamora, María T. Frías Lepoureau, and María I. Percedo Abreu, **contributed with their knowledge to the scientific discussions in the working groups created in the event and in the CaribVET network to generate scientific knowledge and tools for the prevention and control of pandemics in the countries.**

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