

# Regional Short Course on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in the Agricultural Sector



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## Curso Corto Regional sobre Reducción y Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres en el Sector Agropecuario

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In 2023, the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT), a joint initiative of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded a total of 399 disasters related to natural hazards, which is an increase of more than 32 % over the 2003 - 2022 annual average, confirming the trend of increasing frequency and intensity of these events (1). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) pointed out that agriculture is one of the most highly exposed and vulnerable sectors in the context of disaster risk, given its profound dependence on natural resources and climate conditions, which may severely affect food security (2). On the other hand, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) stands out that hazards, whatever their nature, have the potential to affect society as a whole, and animal health is no an exception (3).

Since the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (4), held in Sendai, Japan, in 2015, greater defined protection of livelihoods and productive resources is identified for the first time as a priority for action by States at all levels. Therefore, building capacities to withstand hazards of any nature is a necessity to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Caribbean region is particularly vulnerable to disasters related to natural hazards such as volcanic eruptions, floods, and earthquakes, some of which are exacerbated by climate change. In addition, the tourism appeal and the fact that it consists of a multitude of islands make the Caribbean region a major hub for the exchange of goods and people, which can be a source of significant sanitary and phytosanitary risks. In line with this need, a Regional Course on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) was organized by the National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), WOAHO Collaborating Center for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The course was requested by the Caribbean Animal Health Network (CaribVET) and was included in the CaribGREEN project funded by the French Development Agency (AFD). The overall objective of the course was to contribute to the training of professionals from the agricultural sector to actively participate in DRRM affecting animals, crops and public health, from a territorial, multidisciplinary and intersectoral perspective, focusing on the "One Health" approach.

Dr. Arredondo, Cuban Chief Veterinary Officer and Dr. Alfonso, Head of CENSA's WOAHO Collaborating Center, welcomed the course participants. The attendees played different roles in their home countries and came mainly from the animal and plant health sectors. Their specialties ranged from veterinarians, agronomists and epidemiologists, and they came from fields such as research, academia, and civil protection, along with professors and even veterinary students.

The course was held over three days, June 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> at Capri Hotel, Havana, Cuba. Twenty-five participants from the Caribbean and Central America were distributed by country as follows: Antigua and Barbuda (1), Belize (1), Cuba (15), Dominican Republic (3), El Salvador (2), Grenada (1), and Trinidad and Tobago (1).

The main topics addressed were:

- Global view of disaster situations. One Health approach. International agencies to deal with disaster reduction.
- Disaster risk assessment. Peril, vulnerability and risk analysis. Multi-hazard approaches and One Health.
- Planning and organization of the Disaster Risk Reduction Cycle.
- Experiences in DRRM in the Cuban agricultural sector.

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- National legal basis for DRRM in the agricultural sector.

Lectures by professors and guests were interspersed with participatory exercises in which hypothetical disaster scenarios were assigned to small subgroups of trainees to plan activities according to the different phases of the DRRM cycle and then presented the plenary session. All presentations and supplementary bibliography were distributed. Overall satisfaction with the course was expressed through an online satisfaction survey. The audience expressed the relevance of the topics discussed, which allowed them to identify opportunities for improvement to better play their roles on DRRM.

### REFERENCES

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**Figure 1.** Group photo of the course/  
*Foto de grupo de los cursistas.*

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