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BIOVEXO

BIOVEXO Newsletter July 2023

Dear BIOVEXO newsletter subscribers,

We are pleased to publish our July 2023 newsletter. As we continue to develop biological solutions to limit the impact of the disease on the trees affected by *Xylella fastidiosa*, we are happy to have your support on this important mission!

We are now approaching month 40 of the 60-month BIOVEXO project and, at this milestone, we are pleased to share valuable information on BIOVEXO's activities over the last few months, as well as recent developments and the status quo of *Xylella* in Europe.

A word from BIOVEXO Project Manager, **Mikael Muegge** from RTDS Group:

"BIOVEXO is pleased to release the July 2023 newsletter, at a time when we are making big advances in the development of biopesticide solutions targeting the spread of Xylella *in olives and almonds. With regards to almonds, we have recently concluded a visit to Mallorca to see the spread and devastation caused by* Xylella*, and where we added a new almond orchard to our field trials.*

The BIOVEXO team gathered samples from the new orchard's trees as well as carefully chosen specimens from our current test site to test them for Xylella*. This measurement will serve as the baseline for the upcoming growing season, as well as a benchmark against which the effectiveness of the biopesticides will subsequently be evaluated.*

A new collaboration was also started with FreePOC, a Horizon2020 Research and Innovation project looking at novel testing methods for Xylella*. BIOVEXO is supporting the validation of the new technology by providing access to its fields in Italy and Spain.*

With soaring temperatures in southern Europe over the last few weeks, agriculture is facing a tough time with drought and extreme weather conditions affecting crops and crop yields. In BIOVEXO we hope that the summer months will be kind to our orchards and that our Xylella *applications may support and act as a bio-stimulant to the trees in these difficult months.*

Despite the heat, we hope the stories and updates from BIOVEXO will provide you a good summer read. We look forward to catching up with you in autumn at one of our international events!

In the meantime, Team BIOVEXO wishes you a wonderful summer."

Project News

In April 2023, BIOVEXO entered the **CBE JU Photo Competition**. The Photo Competition had 7 different categories and BIOVEXO was awarded the judges' prize for the Micro & Macro Photography Category with its image of ghost trees killed by *Xylella* in Apulia, Italy.

BIOVEXO's winning photo in the Micro & Macro Category of the CBE JU Photo Competition: Ghost trees caused by Xylella fastidiosa in Apulia, Italy ©RTDS Group

Another BIOVEXO image made it to the public voting round of the Open Category, where it came third, behind worthy winners, the **SUSFERT project**.

As winners of the Micro & Macro Photography category, BIOVEXO received a ticket to the **European Forum for Industrial Biotechnology (EFIB)** in Rotterdam on 24 - 25 October 2023. Additionally, all the winning artwork will be exhibited at the **CBE JU Stakeholder Forum 2023** in Brussels in December 2023, providing a platform to highlight the project's work and impact to a wide audience. We are delighted to have been offered this opportunity to spread the word about the fight against *Xylella fastidiosa*!

In July, BIOVEXO experts flew to Mallorca to inaugurate a new testing site for our innovative biopesticides.

Inspecting the almond trees at BIOVEXO project's new field testing site, Mallorca ©RTDS Group

We took the opportunity to meet Dr. Diego Olmo from the Official Plant Health Laboratory of the Balearic Islands and find out **how qPCR tests are carried out on trees**. We also learned more about the particular impacts of *Xylella* on almonds in Mallorca when we **interviewed local Agricultural Engineer Maria Antonia Tugores**. You can read more about the trip in our **latest blog post**!

BIOVEXO's blog has been active over the last six months!

- We've interviewed **Dr Blanca Landa from the BeXyl project** to learn how their project is fighting *Xylella*.
- We've learned about *Xylella*'s main vector in Europe, **the spittlebug**.
- We've learned how we're making sure **BIOVEXO's products will be safe**.
- We've learned about **how *Xylella* affects almonds**.

Xylella News

The BIOVEXO project enjoyed following the adventures of *Fastidios X*, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)'s cartoon creation spreading the word about *Xylella*. It's available in **9 languages** too! It's a really a great resource!

EFSA has also added **12 new species** to its *Xylella fastidiosa* **host list**. The EFSA database aims to provide information and scientific support to risk assessors, risk managers, and researchers dealing with *Xylella fastidiosa*. The overall number of host plants now includes 433 plant species, 197 genera, and 68 families. Indeed, these numbers rises depending on the detection methods applied. The update, which covers literature published up to 31 December 2022, also includes new information on plant species' tolerance/resistance/response to *Xylella fastidiosa* infection.

EFSA will hold the **EFSA 4th European Conference on *Xylella*** in Lyon, France on 19th – 20th Aug 2023. BIOVEXO is delighted to be playing a prominent role in the **programme**, with BIOVEXO Scientific Coordinator Stéphane Compant chairing a session and BIOVEXO Project Expert Pasquale Saldarelli delivering a presentation. We look forward to seeing many of you there and sharing the latest knowledge in the fight against *Xylella*.

BIOVEXO outreach activities

BIOVEXO project partner DOMCA has **presented BIOVEXO** to the BIO-BOOST Project, a group of European innovation clusters. More recently, DOMCA presented the BIOVEXO project during a Conference organized by CTA (Technological Corporation of Andalusia) for the promotion of bioeconomy projects with partners from Andalusia. After the presentation there was a clustering event with other attendants and partners of other projects. A **catalogue of synergies was created**, including a specific file for BIOVEXO.

The University of Sevilla has held two 'Coffee with scientists' events at which BIOVEXO was presented to students from high schools. The first, in February, to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science; and **the second**, in June, to celebrate World Environment Day.

Students and Scientists at the University of Sevilla's "Coffee with Scientists" event in June 2023 ©University of Sevilla

In addition to this, in May the University of Sevilla included a talk "Mission: to save the olive trees. Development of biocontrol strategies against *Xylella* and its vector" in a workshop entitled "**Contributions of Toxicology in the research of the safety of substances and for society**"

Where to find BIOVEXO next?

24th – 25th Oct - European Forum for Industrial Biotechnology (EFIB)
Rotterdam, Netherlands

6th – 7th Dec – CBE JU Stakeholder forum
Brussels, Belgium

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