International Organisation for Biological Control (IOBC)
Organisation Internationale de Lutte Biologique (OILB)

IOBC is affiliated with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) as the Section of Biological Control of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)

IOBC-Global Newsletter 118 – March 2026

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the latest newsletter. At the last meeting of the Exec we discussed the future of the newsletter and whether we should continue with it in the present format or switch to a more constant feed using social media. Both have their pros and cons. To this end it would be helpful to have some feedback from yourselves on the current format and content, along with any ideas on how we may improve it. If we switched to social media then this would most likely be through LinkedIn.

Thank you once again for those that have contributed to this newsletter and please keep sending your contributions, whenever they are ready, and I will incorporate them in the next one.

John Holland Email: secretary-general@iobc-global.com (retired entomologist /agroecologist), Dorset, England.

Message from the President

Greetings from a soggy Brisbane, where we are making a very wet transition from summer into autumn.

Since the last newsletter, I have had the fortune of being involved in the multiple meetings looking to promote the use of biologicals. In November 2025, I had the fortune to attend the Asia Biologicals Symposium and provide perspectives on evidence-based development and deployment of biological solutions for sustainable agriculture across Asia, and the role IOBC can play in this. This was a broadening of similar efforts already underway such as the Salinas Biological Summit in the USA, and the Biologicals for Crop Protection Workshop in Australia. By bringing together growers, scientists and investors such meetings are helping to ensure we are collaboratively developing translatable and scalable biological solutions.

Unsurprisingly, one of the things that is holding back the wider acceptance and adoption of biological solutions is the lack consistent regulation of biologicals, which limits investor confidence in supporting the development of such solutions and farmer confidence in taking up biologicals. In the Australian context, I have been supporting the Agrifood Innovation Institute's efforts to address this challenge through series of workshops (*The Pathways to Biocontrol – Australia's Future Crop Protection System*), with the report from the first workshop now available online (Advancing Biocontrol In Australian Agriculture: Opportunities and Regulatory Pathways). You will all be aware of similar efforts underway in Europe where the European Parliament has adopted legislation to broaden the adoption to biologicals.

IOBC Global is looking to support evidence-based policy guidance to support harmonisation of terminology, policies and regulations pertaining to biological control and biologicals, ideally aligned with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). FAO continues to make efforts through the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) to support such a harmonisation. Prof. Martin Hill (Past President) is currently leading a project on behalf of IOBC Global, in partnership with CGRFA to conduct a critical global review of the policy, normative and institutional frameworks related to the monitoring, conservation and sustainable use of microbial and invertebrate biological control agents. This spans classical biological control, biopesticides and biostimulants. Please support IOBC efforts in this regard by emailing Martin relevant current policies/legislation/guidelines from your countries in this regard, especially if they are nested within grey literature or government proceedings.

I am excited to report that conferences and events supported by IOBC Global in 2026 are either underway (XVII International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds) or well into the planning stage (Simposio Latinoamericano de Control Biológico). I am looking forward to reading about the outputs and outcomes from these meetings. The IOBC-Global Executive Committee is looking forward to supporting Regional Sections and Working Groups with the promotion of the discipline. A reminder that such meetings are strongly encouraged to publish the emerging papers in our flagship journal, *BioControl* either as Special Issues and/or as Review articles. Please reach out to the Editor-in-Chief, Dr Eric Wajnberg.

In my previous newsletter article, I mentioned that IOBC Global had begun exploring options for the next International Congress of Biological Control (ICBC4) in Asia to build on the tremendous success of ICBC3 in Costa Rica. I am pleased to note that the Executive Committee has settled on India as the prospective host country for ICBC4, and we are in discussions with IOBC-APRS to progress this in partnership with the Society for Biocontrol Advancement (India). More information will follow in future announcements to ensure we all have sufficient advance notice to plan to attend and to make the event a success.

BioControl – The Official Journal of IOBC

Over the years, our journal BioControl always performed well. We are actually receiving an increasing number of submissions. For example, in 2025, we received more than 650 manuscripts (on average 1.8 MS per day). These submissions were peer-reviewed with good turnaround times: on average 21 days from submission to first decision and 180 days from submission to acceptance. The rejection rate was almost 80%. Full-text downloads are also increasing. Last year, for example, almost 210,000 downloads were recoded. Our journal remains in the 1st quarter of the category of Entomology.

Our journal BioControl plays a pivotal role in disseminating cutting-edge research in the field of biological control. BioControl, as the official journal of the IOBC, aims to publish high-quality scientific articles encompassing diverse aspects of biological control. The journal serves as a platform for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share their findings, insights, and innovations, thus fostering the growth and advancement of biological control methods worldwide.

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote excellence in research, we invite all members and potential authors to contribute to BioControl by submitting review article proposals and special issue proposals. Review articles provide comprehensive overviews and critical analyses of specific topics within the realm of biological control, whereas special issues focus on emerging areas or themes that are of significant importance to our field. By sharing your expertise and knowledge, you can contribute to the enrichment of the scientific community and help shape the future of biological control.

We would also like to remind you about the opportunity to publish your papers by making use of the Transformative Agreements currently in place with numerous countries worldwide. You can find the complete list of these agreements here: https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/institutional-agreements. Transformative Agreements allow participating institutions to combine journal subscription access with Open Access publication costs. These agreements not only help institutions manage the cost and administration of Open Access but also provide authors with a convenient way to fulfill the Open Access requirements of their funders.
If your institution has a Transformative Agreement, you have the option to publish your article Open Access, with the associated fees covered in BioControl (and actually all Springer Nature journals that are included in the agreements). Several studies have shown Open Access articles see higher rates of usage, citations, and social media discussion when measured against comparable subscription articles. See here: https://www.springernature.com/gp/open-research/about/whitepapers, for Springer Nature White papers on how Open Access is developing globally and the benefits of publishing your research Open Access.

We encourage all IOBC members to consider the benefits of Open Access publishing and actively participate in shaping the future of BioControl. By submitting review articles and proposing special issues, you can contribute to advancing our understanding of biological control and its applications, while also establishing your expertise within the field.

Please direct your review article proposals and special issue proposals to the Editor-in-Chief of BioControl, Dr. Eric Wajnberg at eric.wajnberg@inrae.fr.

The Editor-in-Chief and the entire editorial team eagerly await your contributions and look forward to working with you to continue pushing the boundaries of biological control research.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the field of biological control.

Best regards,

Eric Wajnberg
Editor-in-Chief of BioControl

News from the Regional Sections

IOBC-WPRS

There are nine events taking place in 2026.

Pherosphere 2026: Workshop of the IOBC-WPRS WG "Pheromones and Other Semiochemicals in Integrated Production" 8 - 12 March 2026, Dossenheim, Germany

11th Meeting of the IOBC-WPRS WG "Landscape Management for Functional Biodiversity"
11 - 13 March 2026, Avignon, France

Workshop of the IOBC-WPRS WG "Pesticides and Beneficial Organisms" 25 - 26 March 2026, Berlin, Germany

International Congress on Invertebrate Pathology and Microbial Control (SIP-IOBC 2026)
2 - 6 August 2026, s'Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

18th Meeting of the IOBC-WPRS WG "Integrated Control in Protected Crops, Temperate Climate"
31 August - 3 September 2026, Boskoop, The Netherlands

BREBCA 2026, Benefits and Risks of Exotic Biological Control Agents
14 - 17 September 2026, San Michele all'Adige, Trento, Italy

IOBC-WPRS WG "Integrated Control in Oilseed Crops (ICOC)"
29 September - 1 October 2026, SLU, Campus Alnarp, Lomma, Sweden

Commission "Young IOBC-WPRS", PhD Symposium 2026: "Biological Control of Arthropod Pests and Plant Diseases"11 - 13 November 2026, Canarian Institute of Agricultural Research (ICIA) in Tenerife, Spain

OBC-WPRS WG "Modern Biotechnology in Integrated Plant Production" & EU Project REACT
22 - 24 November 2026, Chania, Crete, Greece

IOBC-WPRS recently published one **new eBulletin** (Vol. 181): Preceedings of the IOBC-WPRS Working Group Meeting on Integrated Protection of Date Palms at CRSTRA-Biskra (Algeria), 09-11 November 2025

IOBC-APRS

Two conferences were held in the APRS region and are reported here by Dr Michael Day

Biological control highlights from the NZPPS Conference 2025

The New Zealand Plant Protection Society (NZPPS) held its Annual Conference (refer Figure below) at the Rydges Latimer Hotel, Christchurch, under the theme "Protecting Plants with Science." Supported by the International Congress on Biological Invasions 2023, the Horticentre Charitable Trust, and Euphresco III, the event brought together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to share the latest findings in plant protection. A number of presentations focused on biological control of insect pests and plant pathogens, reflecting the growing global interest in sustainable pest management and natural enemy utilization.

This write-up summarizes some of the key papers presented and discussed in sessions related to biological control of insect pests and plant pathogens, use of natural enemies etc. The paper also covers the special session on the biological control initiatives in the Pacific.

Biological control of insect pests

Wesis Pus *et al's* paper entitled "Review of the resident noctuid parasitoids in New Zealand and their potential to control fall armyworm (FAW) (*Spodoptera frugiperda*)" provided a comprehensive review of the resident noctuid parasitoids in New Zealand and their potential to control fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), a recent invasive pest to New Zealand. The paper highlighted the resident parasitoid fauna of noctuids found in New Zealand to assess their potential for biological control of FAW and examined published records and host-parasitoid databases to compile a list of all parasitoid species attacking Noctuidae in New Zealand. The paper also reported on their diversity, host range, general life history traits, and prior use in biocontrol to assess possibilities for potential FAW biocontrol. Preliminary studies revealed that indigenous or resident parasitoids, *Cotesia ruficrus* and *Meteorus pulchricornis* were both parasitising FAW in North and South Island maize fields at a range of 1-10%. Studies are on-going to fully understand these and other parasitoids of FAW and to optimize their use in integrated pest management programs, particularly in maize and sweet corn cropping systems.

Biological control of plant pathogens

The potential for controlling fire blight caused by the bacterium, *Erwinia amylovora*, with *Aureobasidium pullulans,* active ingredient in both *Nufarm's Botector® (isolates DSM 14940 & 1494)* and *UPL's Aureo® Gold (isolate YBCA5)* on russet-sensitive apple varieties was discussed in a paper presented by Mary Honer *et al*. The results, inter alia, showed generally that A. *pullulans* gave good fire blight control but can cause an increased incidence of russet on russet-sensitive fruits. Their work also revealed that the incidence of russet associated with *A. pullulans* use can be managed on russet-sensitive varieties by using individual treatments such as gibberellins, kaolin, and variations to the concentration or application rates of *A. pullulans*.

Monika Joshi *et al* conducted *in vitro* assay studies on the inhibition of *Rhizobium leguminosarum,* which forms symbiotic nodules on pea roots to fix atmospheric nitrogen (N2), by soft alternative and synthetic products used for controlling fusarium root rot. The five bioproducts tested inhibited the growth of *R. leguminosarum* to varying degrees, but none of the eight biological extracts and synthetic products inhibited *R. leguminosarum* growth. For effective nitrogen fixation under field conditions, compatibility of natural products applied to the crop and *R. leguminosarum* is recommended.

Two experimental glasshouse studies were conducted by Helen Moe David *et al* using, firstly, four individual *Trichoderma* isolates and Apron® XL fungicide seed treatment (as control) against a virulent New Zealand *R. solani* strain 043-4 of the soil-borne pathogen *Rhizoctonia solani* in Asian cabbage or Pak Choi (*Brassica rapa* subsp. c*hinesis*). The second experiment tested the bio-fumigation properties

of leaves of several brassica species. Overall, both the *Trichoderma* seed treatment and bio-fumigation showed promise for control of *R. solani* in Pak Choi, but the authors cautioned that field validation is required.

Innovative investigations on microbiome-engineered grapevines are being investigated by Justine Larrouy *et al* as a novel solution for healthy future vineyards against Grapevine trunk disease (GTD) that is one of the most destructive threats to vineyards, particularly for Sauvignon Blanc, New Zealand's flagship variety. This preliminary research aims to enhance grapevine resistance to GTD by introducing beneficial microbiomes during the nursery propagation stage.

The ability of polysaccharides from two species of domesticated *Ulva* seaweed to reduce disease incidence on kiwifruit caused by *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *actinidiae* (Psa) and on tomato caused by *P. syringae* pv. *tomato* (Pto) was demonstrated in glasshouse experiments by Joel Vanneste *et al* on potted kiwifruit plants and tomato seedlings. The study demonstrated that treatment with ulvans reduced significantly disease incidence in tomato seedlings when the plants were treated 7 days before inoculation, but also when they were treated just before inoculation, suggesting that, in addition to being elicitors, ulvans could affect the pathogen directly.

Patanun *et al's* paper reported the effect of seed treatment on seed germination and emergence of seeds of five agricultural or forestry species: *Lolium perenne* (perennial ryegrass), *Bromus willdenowii* (prairie grass), *Triticum aestivum* (wheat), *Brassica napus* (forage rape) and *Pinus radiata* (radiata pine). Seed treatment is used as a delivery mechanism of a beneficial fungal volatile organic compound 6-pentyl-2H-pyran-2-one (6-PP), produced by *Trichoderma* spp. This would help enhance plant growth and resilience of field crops such as wheat and perennial ryegrass to abiotic and biotic stresses.

Special Session on Pacific Biocontrol

A few presentations were focused specifically on biocontrol efforts in the Pacific. These included:

Lindon Tari *et al* highlighted the collaborative success in managing coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) in Vanuatu. The presentation highlighted the collaborative efforts of Biosecurity Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Ministry of Agriculture, the AgResearch Group, New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science Ltd, and the Pacific Community (SPC) in building and delivering an effective response. The achievements to date included slowing the spread of CRB to outer islands, the successful field establishment of biological control agents (*Metarhizium majus* and *Oryctes rhinoceros nudivirus*), and capacity building through staff training and infrastructure upgrades. The project has also contributed to increased public awareness and strengthened local surveillance networks.

Chantal Probst *et al* illuminated on the biocontrol prospects of the increasingly invasive merremia *(Decalobanthus peltatus)* whereby surveys conducted in 11 countries have mostly found generalist natural enemies, and often little damage, so the search for an effective biocontrol agent continues. The presentation shared findings from the genetic studies and natural enemy surveys, discussed the challenges when considering biocontrol for native species, and outlined next steps and future prospects for the biocontrol of merremia.

The Samoa-based study by Sateki Fangupo investigated the seasonal and relative abundance of natural enemies, voz., *Trichogramma chilonis* and *Cotesia vestalis* and their contribution to the management of *Crocidolomia pavonana* and *Plutella xylostella.* The findings highlighted the crucial role of seasonal rainfall in shaping pest–parasitoid dynamics and provided valuable insights for developing climate-responsive and sustainable pest management strategies in brassica cropping systems in Samoa.

Overall, there was strong emphasis in the Conference on biological and ecological innovations for pest and disease management, increasing focus on compatibility, field validation, microbiome manipulation, integration of natural enemies into IPM frameworks and importantly, regional collaboration, particularly within the Pacific, in enhancing local capacity and resilience against emerging pests.

Prepared by: Sivapragasam, A. (Research Associate, CAB International -SEA and East Asia)

Biological Control of *Mikania micrantha* in the Asian-Pacific Region

Biological control of *Mikania micrantha* (Kunth (Asteraceae) in the Asian-Pacific region began with the introduction of *Liothrips mikaniae* (Priesner) (Thysanoptera: Phlaeothripidae) into the Solomon Islands (1988) and Malaysia (1990). The thrips failed to establish in either country. The thrips was also sent to Papua New Guinea in 1989 but the colony in quarantine died out before any field releases were conducted.

Strains of the rust *Puccinia spegazzinii* de Toni (Pucciniaceae) were collected from several countries in tropical America and tested against *M. micrantha* populations from numerous countries in the introduced range to determine the most virulent strain for each population of *M. micrantha*. For India, the strain from Trinidad, was considered to be the most suitable, while for the Pacific, the strain from eastern Ecuador was considered the most damaging. *Puccinia spegazzinii* was released in India around Assam, from 2005-2006, and Kerala in 2006. There was initial infection observed in the field but populations did not persist. It was thought that insufficient releases, along with unfavourable conditions contributed to the agent failing to establish at any site. In 2006, *P. spegazzinii* was introduced into mainland China but also failed to establish. The rust was also introduced into Taiwan in 2008, where it established at numerous sites, particularly in the higher elevation areas and in areas to the south.

Figure 1. *Mikania micrantha* (left); *Puccinia spegazzinii* infecting a *Mikania micrantha* leaf in Vanuatu (right).

The *P. spegazzinii* strain from eastern Ecuador was released in Papua New Guinea in 2008 and in Fiji in 2009. The rust became widely established in both countries. Subsequent field monitoring in PNG found the rust significantly reduced the percent cover of *M. micrantha* by about 50%.

The rust has subsequently been successfully introduced into Vanuatu (2012) and the Cook Islands (2017). In both countries, populations of *M. micrantha* are reported to have decreased in most areas, where the rust has established. The rust has been reported present in the Solomon Islands, where it established naturally.

Puccinia spegazzinii was introduced into Guam and Palau but failed to establish in either country. The rust has been recently released on Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean but establishment has not yet been confirmed.

Figure 2. *Mikania micrantha* infestations at Tokua, PNG, before (left) and after (right) the release of *Puccinia spegazzinii*.

Mikania micrantha is considered a major weed in many countries in the Asian-Pacific region and due to its rapid growth and ability to produce thousands of seeds, current control methods are costly or not sustainable. Therefore, biological control using the rust would be a long-term, sustainable and environmentally-friendly method to control the weed in many impacted countries.

IOBC-NTRS

In 2025, the IOBC-NTRS interacted in various activities that fostered the exchange of ideas and generated rich debates, contributing to the development of biological control within the specific context of each country in the region. We met at several events and participated in different activities organized by our two working groups, **Parasitoids of the Neotropical Region and Conservation Biological Control, during the 18th SICONBIOL** (Symposium on Biological Control) held in September in the city of Gramado, Brazil.
Furthermore, members of the executive committee of IOBC-NTRS participated at the **IX SAVE** (International Seminar on Plant Health) held in Varadero, Cuba; the **First National Bio-inputs Forum of the Dominican Republic** in Santo Domingo; Dominican Republic; and the **Third Pan-American Bio-inputs Forum** in Medellín, Colombia.

SICONBIOL 2025

IX SAVE (International Seminar on Plant Health)

We also held a heartfelt tribute to **Dr. Francisco Ferrer Wurst**, to celebrate his extensive career. Dr. Ferrer Wurst was the second president of the IOBC-NTRS, serving from 1994 to 1998. We deeply regret his recent passing, recognizing that his legacy has marked a milestone in sustainable agriculture in Latin America.

During 2025 we also celebrated the **35th anniversary of the IOBC-NTRS** with a webinar in which we had the honour of the participation of all the previous presidents. They recounted the main challenges and achievements of their terms, moving us with their anecdotes and memories. We also held a commemorative meeting during the XII CAE (Argentine Congress of Entomology), where the first president of the IOBC-NTRS, Dr. Miguel Zapater, and the current president, Dr. Fernanda Cingolani, came together in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán, the same place where our regional section was founded 35 years ago. Scientific papers from members of the IOBC/NTRS Working Groups were also presented at this event. We are convinced that remembering and exploring our history helps us understand our origins and continue building our collective identity.

Throughout this year, we have offered our regular **webinars**, which covered diverse and highly interesting topics. The lectures are given in Spanish, Portuguese, or English, with subtitles, and the final questions include translation. The webinars have been attended online by members from different countries belonging to the IOBC/NTRS, with an average of 80 participants, providing the perfect opportunity to continue connecting ourselves.

Fernanda Cingolani (President)
on behalf of the entire IOBC-NTRS board

Updates from the IOBC-Global Working Groups

International Working Group of Ostrinia and other maize pests

Contacts: Dr. Ulli Kuhlmann, u.kuhlmann@cabi.org, Dr. Dominic Reisig, ddreisig@ncsu.edu
Dr. Feng Zhang, f.zhang@cabi.org

More than 80 of the world's leading experts on maize insect pests have shared the latest research findings on sustainable pest management at the 29th International Working Group of *Ostrinia* and other maize pests (IWGO) Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), and the International Organization of Biological Control (IOBC) – the parent organization of IWGO – co-hosted the conference.

Participants of the 29th Conference of the International Working Group of *Ostrinia* and other maize pests (IWGO) of IOBC Global in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, from 28 to 30 October 2025 (Photo MARDI, Serdang, Malaysia)

Scientists from 15 countries, including Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, the USA, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and some countries in Europe, came together for a scientific knowledge exchange at the MARDI Auditorium on their headquarters in Serdang.

Opening ceremony in the presence of Dr Haji Mohamad Zabawi bin Abdul Ghani, Director General of MARDI (Photo MARDI, Serdang, Malaysia)

The scientific programme spanned much of the current research on maize insect pests worldwide. Eight thematic sessions covered advances in *Bt* resistance monitoring and management, breeding and host-plant resistance, integrated pest management (IPM) for piercing-sucking insects, biological control innovations, and sustainable approaches for fall armyworm control in both smallholder and large-scale systems. Scientists presented on a range of topics from mechanistic studies (analysing the cause-and-effect relationships) on insect resistance and behavioural regulation to applied work on UAV-based natural-enemy releases, farmer-centred IPM packages, and radar-based migratory insect surveillance.

Across three days, around 60 oral presentations were delivered, complemented by nine posters featuring work on cross-resistance, improved monitoring tools, native biocontrol agents, entomopathogenic microbes, and professional training in plant health. Together, the programme reflected a collaborative community tackling maize pest challenges with both scientific rigor and practical innovation. Several younger scientists attended the conference and presented their research topics, and three of them received the IOBC-Global Travel Award (see below)

The conference was convened by Dr Ulli Kuhlmann from CABI in Switzerland, and co-convened by Dr Dominic Reisig from North Carolina State University, USA, and Dr Feng Zhang from CANI in East & South Asia.

MARDI contributes to global agricultural knowledge

The opening ceremony was officiated by Dato' Dr Haji Mohamad Zabawi bin Abdul Ghani, Director General of MARDI, who said, "MARDI contributes to global agricultural knowledge through publications, conferences, and collaborations with leading research institutes and universities worldwide. Its close collaboration with IOBC Global, IWGO and CABI is a good example of international partnership in addressing invasive species through science, advancing agricultural research, and ensuring food security."

How science can help protect maize

The IWGO is the oldest global working group of IOBC which has been meeting since 1968 to see how science can help protect maize. Maize is a globally important crop that remains crucial in 2025 for food, animal feed, and increasingly industrial uses like biofuels. Its importance is underscored by its role providing at least 30% of the food calories to over 4.5 billion people in 94 low and lower middle-income countries. Dr Kuhlmann said, "The IOBC-Global - IWGO platform continues to play a vital role in fostering global partnerships and facilitating the exchange of ideas and experiences that advance sustainable agricultural practices worldwide. Many of the most serious maize pests are invasive alien insect species. Therefore, strong trans-regional and global collaboration is needed to tackle them. As proposed and agreed, the IWGO convenors will organize the next and 30th IWGO Conference – potentially in Hungary - in October 2027".

How IOBC-GLOBAL helps early career scientists through travel awards
IOBC-GLOBAL helps early career biocontrol workers attend IOBC events through our travel awards. Event organisors can apply for funding to which attendees can then apply.

Three attendees of this event received the IOBC -Global Travel Award: (1) Precious Mpofu from the International University of Science & Technology at Palapye in Botswana; (2) Nancy Ngoma from CAB International (CABI), Lusaka in Zambia and (3) Ongani Chirwa from Zambia Research and Development Centre (ZRDC) and Honda Farmers' Agricultural Camp, Lusaka in Zambia.

IOBC Travel Award winners (from left to right) Precious Mpofu (Botswana), Nancy Ngoma (Zambia) and Ongani Chirwa (Zambia) (Photo KCS, Delémont, Switzerland)

Here is their feedback.

Precious Mpofu, PhD Candidate, Botswana International University of Science and Technology, Botswana

I am sincerely grateful to the International Organisation for Biological Control (IOBC Global) for

granting me the Early Career Award, which enabled me to attend and present my research at the 29th IWGO Conference held in Malaysia. This was my first opportunity to take part in such a global scientific platform focused on sustainable maize pest management and biological control. My presentation, titled "Fall Armyworm (Spodoptera frugiperda) herbivory in smallholder maize systems: Implications for natural enemy activity and habitat management in Southern Africa," shared findings from collaborative research conducted in Botswana and Namibia. Using a combination of BioLeaf app assessments and plasticine caterpillar assays, the study demonstrated that fall armyworm infestation and herbivory were highest in maize fields, while predator activity was stronger in adjacent natural and edge habitats. These results highlight the importance of habitat diversity in supporting natural enemies and strengthening ecological pest regulation in smallholder systems. Attending the IWGO Conference was both an inspiring and rewarding experience. I learned about new approaches to integrated pest management (IPM), biocontrol innovations, and digital tools that could enhance pest monitoring. The opportunity to exchange ideas with leading experts, early-career scientists, and practitioners from around the world was especially valuable. Beyond the scientific programme, the conference also provided space for cultural exchange and meaningful networking. The experience also broadened my professional perspective and boosted my confidence in communicating research to an international audience. I wish to thank IOBC Global and IWGO for this exceptional opportunity. The support has greatly contributed to my academic development and reaffirmed my commitment to advancing agroecological pest management for more resilient smallholder farming systems in Southern Africa.

Nancy Ngoma, Research Assistant, Sustainable Farming Project, CABI Lusaka, Zambia.

Attending the 29th International Working Group on Ostrinia and Other Maize Pests (IWGO) Conference in Malaysia was an enriching experience. One that was made possible through the support of the IOBC-Global grant. As an early career biological control scientist, this opportunity allowed me to connect with professionals and peers dedicated to advancing sustainable pest management and crop protection. Through presentations and discussions, I gained valuable insights into emerging pest management strategies, host-parasitoid interactions and sustainable approaches to maize protection. This conference also gave me the opportunity to share some of the work we are doing on farmer-centred IPM. Witnessing how other researches are also being translated into practical solutions for the farmers was enlightening for me. This experience also gave me an opportunity to make valuable connections. I am sincerely grateful to IOBC-Global for this wonderful opportunity. The knowledge, networks and inspiration gained will continue to shape my career and contribution to the field of biological control.

Ongani Chirwa, Plot Sub C1/1/C/87A Waterfalls, Chongwe, Zambia

I'm truly honoured to have been selected as one of the three Travel Award winners at this year's 29th IWGO Conference in Malaysia. Coming from a small farming community in Zambia and representing the Zambia Research and Development Centre (ZRDC) as well as my local farmer cooperative, this opportunity meant a great deal to me. It gave me a chance to share the realities from our fields, learn from others, and see how research connects us across continents.

At the conference, I presented my poster titled "Characterization of 25 Zambian Maize Landraces for Resistance to Key Lepidopteran Pests and Farmer-Preferred Traits." The study focuses on evaluating traditional maize varieties under natural pest conditions to see which ones show potential resistance to pests like Spodoptera frugiperda. At the same time, we're paying attention to what farmers value most, which are traits like maturity, grain quality, and yield. The project is still in its early stages, but even now it's clear that our local landraces hold a lot of untapped potential.

What stood out to me during the conference was how open and willing everyone was to share ideas. I learned new approaches to pest screening, heard different perspectives on breeding and genetic diversity, and had meaningful conversations with researchers working in situations very similar to

ours back home. It reminded me that although we face different landscapes and different challenges, we're all trying to solve the same big problems.
I'm very grateful to the organizers, the selection committee, and my colleagues at ZRDC for giving me the chance to be part of this experience. I return home encouraged, better equipped, and excited to keep building the link between science and the soil, and to continue contributing to research that genuinely supports farmers and strengthens our agricultural systems.

Global Working Group on Mass Rearing & Quality Assurance (MRQA)

Contact: Rose Buitemhuis, Email rose.buitenhuis@vinelandresearch.com

The 16th Workshop of the MRQA will be held in Tucson, AZ, USA, October 27-31, 2026. The workshop objective is to explore opportunities for advancing the rearing of high quality entomophagous and phytophagous insects and mites, entomopathogenic nematodes, and other invertebrates for plant and animal pest management, human and animal food, and a variety of other uses.

The program will consist of symposia on current "Hot topics," invited and submitted presentations and posters on mass rearing and quality assurance. Presentations will serve as a basis for discussion and exchange, with the final aim of improving collaboration among scientists and practitioners. General topics for the sessions include: 1. Mass rearing and evaluating biological control agents for crop pests 2. Mass rearing for SIT and other autocidal pest control 3. Methods for assessing the quality of biological control products 4. Mass rearing insects for food and feed 5. Open session on rearing invertebrates Additional suggestions are welcome A technical visit will be organized in cooperation with ARBICO and the University of Arizona. The next announcement will provide more information on how to submit an abstract, student and early career travel awards, registration etc.

Biological Control and Management of *Parthenium* Weed

Contact: Lorraine Strathie; Email: strathiel@arc.agric.za

Fourth International Workshop of the IOBC Global Working Group on Biological Control and Management of *Parthenium hysterophorus* – *April 2025*

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Parthenium hysterophorus L. (Asteraceae; parthenium weed), invades about 50 countries, severely impacting crop and animal production, biodiversity conservation, and human and animal health. Many affected countries lack adequate resources to manage infestations of this plant, despite the direct impacts on livelihoods and the environment. In 2009, a Working Group on the Biological Control and Management of Parthenium Weed was founded under the auspices of the International Organisation of Biological Control. This Working Group aims to promote the use of sustainable, environmentally safe, economically feasible, and socially acceptable control methods, including biological control, of *P. hysterophorus* in its introduced range. Workshops of this Working Group are held

approximately every four years, to facilitate the sharing of knowledge on the biology and management of parthenium weed and enable networking among researchers from around the globe. The First Workshop was held in 2010 in Kenya, in conjunction with the Eighth IOBC International Workshop on Biological Control and Management of *Chromolaena odorata* and Other Eupatorieae. Subsequent workshops were held in 2014 in Ethiopia, together with the Integrated Pest Management Innovation Lab Parthenium project that was operational in East Africa at that time, and a Third Workshop was held in 2018 in conjunction with the First International Conference on Biological Control in Bengaluru, India. Post-COVID-19 pandemic constraints postponed the Fourth Workshop until 2025.

The Fourth International Workshop of the IOBC Working Group on Biological Control and Management of Parthenium Weed was held on 7 and 8 April 2025, using MS Teams webinars. Originally, arrangements had been made to hold the workshop in Bangladesh. However, the unexpected termination of USAID-funded projects in February 2025 ceased partial support for the workshop. Although some networking opportunities were lost without holding the workshop in-person, it was decided to proceed with an online workshop to provide for collaborative engagement on *P. hysterophorus*. The virtual platform enabled an increase in workshop participants, with 24 oral presentations and attendance by 44 participants from 14 countries (USA, Canada, Trinidad, Switzerland, Oman, Ethiopia, South Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, China and Australia). The workshop ran from 8.00 am to 3.00 pm UTC daily, to accommodate participants from around the globe. The virtual platform facilitated information sharing and discussions on parthenium weed and its management, and enabled attendance by participants who had been limited by travel costs.

The Working Group Convenor (Lorraine Strathie, Agricultural Research Council, South Africa) welcomed workshop participants, encouraged discussions, and recommended that participants elevate awareness of *P. hysterophorus* to their respective national authorities to activate management interventions. The vision of the IOBC Global was presented, relayed from the IOBC Global President Raghu Sathyamurthy (CSIRO, Australia), and IOBC membership was encouraged.

Rangaswamy Muniappan (Virginia Tech, USA) officially opened the Fourth Workshop proceedings, providing a historical account of the Working Group and previous workshops. This was followed by a round of introductions by workshop participants. The keynote address 'Biological control of parthenium (*Parthenium hysterophorus* (Asteraceae)) in Australia' was delivered by Kunjithapatham Dhileepan (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Biosecurity Queensland, Australia). Biological control of parthenium weed in Australia began about 50 years ago. After conducting native range surveys and evaluating the host specificity of selected natural enemies, 11 biological control agents (nine insects and two rust fungi) were introduced, each released during about three to five year periods, resulting in their establishment in Queensland, Australia, with differing impacts. The stem-boring weevil *Listronotus setosipennis* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae), root-crown boring moth *Carmenta* sp. nr *ithacae* (Lepidoptera: Sesiidae), seed-feeding weevil *Smicronyx lutulentus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) and leaf-feeding beetle *Calligrapha bicolorata* (previously *Zygogramma bicolorata*) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) were recommended for consideration for countries where *P. hysterophorus* has invaded. The stem-galling weevil *Conotrachelus albocinereus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) and stem-boring moth *Platphalonidia mystica* (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae) were recommended if the stem-galling moth *Epiblema strenuana* (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae) cannot be introduced into some countries due to its oligophagous host range. Redistribution of locally adapted field populations of the biocontrol agents were advised, to facilitate establishment success. Assistance to supply these biological control agents to countries wherein parthenium weed is problematic, was offered, upon request. The importance of the need for multiple, differing biological control agents for cumulative suppression of parthenium weed was emphasised.

Oral presentations on *P. hysterophorus* during the workshop were thematically grouped as Surveys and impacts, Modelling, Weed biology, Allelopathy, and the second day of workshop proceedings was devoted entirely to Biological control. During the first session, Sangay Dorji (Bhutan and University of Queensland, Australia), Ilias Hossain (Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute, Bangladesh), Sheikh Muhammad Masum (Sher-E-Bangla Agricultural University, Bangladesh) and his graduate students from Bangladesh, and Mahaad Issa Shammas (Dhofar University, Oman) presented on the rapid spread of parthenium weed and its impact in their respective countries. Sangay Dorji presented on the comparative analysis of mechanistic and correlative models for global suitability of parthenium weed and correlative model predictions for Bhutan with potential impact on agriculture, with northward expansion and increased extent predicted. Four students from the Sher-E-Bangla Agricultural University presented on the impact of land cover and climate change on distribution of parthenium weed, ecological parameters relating to its invasiveness, response to seasonal changes, soil types, allelopathic extracts from plants and herbicides and its allelopathic effect on crops in Bangladesh. Proceedings of the first day concluded after discussions of these topics.

The second day of the workshop proceedings opened with a presentation by L. Strathie on the IOBC Global and its Working Groups. Thereafter, 11 presentations from participants from six countries discussed the status of research and implementation of various biological control agents in their respective countries. R.K. Gupta (Sher-E-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Jammu, India) related that *C. bicolorata* was introduced into India in 1983 and had spread widely by both natural and deliberate introductions. Parthenium weed reductions by about 30% improved native species richness. Due to plant plasticity and beetle diapause, augmentative releases of the beetle were recommended. Arup Kumar Sarma (Assam Agricultural University, India) stressed the need for the uptake of biological control measures for parthenium weed, especially the introduction of *C. bicolorata* in his state. Prakya Sreerama Kumar (ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, India) reported the winter rust *Puccinia abrupta* var. *partheniicola* (Pucciniaceae) at epiphytotic scale near Bengaluru in 2023, after a prolonged absence. Biological control and management of parthenium weed in South Africa was reviewed by L. Strathie. *Listronotus setosipennis*, *C. bicolorata*, *S. lutulentus*, and the summer rust *Puccinia xanthii* var. *parthenii-hysterophorae* (Pucciniaceae) have been introduced and established, with differing extent and impacts, while *P. abrupta* var. *partheniicola* was detected earlier, without deliberate introduction. Wondi Mersie (Virginia State University, USA) discussed the establishment of a biological control programme, development of infrastructure and capacity in Ethiopia, and the evaluation, mass-rearing and successful field establishment of *C. bicolorata* and *L. setosipennis* on *P. hysterophorus* in Ethiopia and Uganda, with the support of the Integrated Pest Management Innovation Lab project of USAID from 2005 to 2022. He reported on the outcomes and successes of this project, conducted under a series of successful competitive grant awards, which developed research and implementation of biological control on *P. hysterophorus* in Ethiopia particularly, as well as other East African countries (Uganda, Kenya). Agent importation, host range evaluation, approval for release, mass-rearing, field implementation and evaluation were successfully conducted. Both introduced insect agents were well established in various areas of Ethiopia during this project. Abdul Rehman (CABI, Pakistan) reported on the fortuitous introduction of *C. bicolorata* and *P. abrupta* var. *partheniicola* into Pakistan. Additionally, in 2022, after assessing its host specificity, *L. setosipennis* was introduced into Pakistan and has been established. Additional agents are under consideration for evaluation in Pakistan. Daniella Egli (Agricultural Research Council, South Africa) discussed oviposition and preliminary host-specificity results for *Carmenta* sp. nr *ithacae* which is being evaluated in quarantine in South Africa, following recent importation from Australia. Pramod Kumar Jha (Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal) reported on the fortuitous establishment of *C. bicolorata* and *P. abrupta* var. *partheniicola* in Nepal and highlighted the recent approval and importance of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Invasive Alien Species Management in Nepal. Muniappan presented on the opportunities for biological control of invasive weeds in Bangladesh, recommending *P. hysterophorus*, *Chromolaena odorata* (Eupatorieae), *Lantana camara*

(Verbenaceae), *Mikania micrantha* (Eupatorieae), *Mimosa diplotricha* (Fabaceae), *Pontederia crassipes* (Pontederiaceae), *Pistia stratiotes* (Araceae) and *Salvinia molesta* (Salviniaceae) as prime candidates for consideration as opportunities arise. There is currently no dedicated laboratory and expertise to screen newly introduced weed biocontrol agents for Bangladesh. Madhab Chandra Das (Virginia Tech, Bangladesh) reported on the establishment of *P. hysterophorus* in 1988 in Bangladesh and detection in October 2022 of *C. bicolorata*, which had fortuitously established without deliberate introduction. *Puccinia abrupta* var. *partheniicola* has not yet been reported in Bangladesh, although it occurs in India, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan. Mohasin Hussain Khan (Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh) discussed the rearing of *C. bicolorata* in a university screen house and field releases. Following these presentations, a robust discussion session was held on various aspects related to biological control of parthenium weed. The need for increased awareness and declaration of parthenium weed as a noxious weed in countries such as Nepal, Thailand, China, and Myanmar was raised, as well as the ongoing need for observations and records of fortuitous introductions of biocontrol agents on parthenium weed.

A set of recommendations that arose from the presentations and deliberations during this Fourth International Workshop of the IOBC Working Group on Biological Control and Management of Parthenium Weed were developed collectively by the workshop participants, as a global recommendation for countries affected by *P. hysterophorus*. The recommendations proposed and approved were:

1. Governments of countries where *Parthenium hysterophorus* has been detected are encouraged to declare it as a noxious weed.

2. Countries where *P. hysterophorus* has not been detected are advised to add this plant to their quarantine list.

3. Governments are encouraged to establish policies for the introduction, evaluation, and release of biological control agents.

4. National governments, regional programmes and donor agencies are encouraged to support biological control of *P. hysterophorus*.

5. Governments are encouraged to utilize existing biological control data from other countries when considering the introduction of biological control agents for *P. hysterophorus*.

6. Coordination of biological control activities is encouraged to take a regional approach for the assessment of biological control agents for *P. hysterophorus*.

7. Regions are encouraged to establish a committee of experts (plant taxonomic and biocontrol) to coordinate country approaches for test plant lists for host-specificity considerations for biological control agent introductions for *P. hysterophorus*.

8. It is recommended that the FAO code of conduct is followed for the importation and release of exotic biological control agents into countries.

9. Implementation of biological control must be given high priority to take action in countries where *P. hysterophorus* has established.

10. Introduction of multiple biological control agents is recognised as necessary and is encouraged, to maximize the potential level of biological control of *P. hysterophorus*.

11. Countries are encouraged to develop integrated management strategies incorporating biological control and its compatible approaches for *P. hysterophorus*.

12. Setting up of biological control information (such as links or details for Biological Control of Weeds World Catalogue, International Parthenium Weed Newsletters, key active institutions,

country contacts, priority relevant publications including books and reviews) for the IOBC Working Group on *P. hysterophorus* is recommended to be considered being housed on the IOBC Global website, if feasible.

13. Researchers are encouraged to contact their relevant national and regional biological control institutions (e.g. AIRCA, CGIAR) to promote work on *P. hysterophorus* biological control.

14. Capacity building of scientists from developing countries is encouraged, for sharing of knowledge on the biological control of *P. hysterophorus*.

Following the development of these recommendations, future actions required of this Working Group and the next workshop were discussed, and Lorraine Strathie was re-elected as Convenor. Closing remarks and official closure by L. Strathie concluded proceedings of the Fourth International Workshop of the IOBC Global Working Group on Biological Control and Management of Parthenium Weed.

Assisting the Leaf-Feeding Beetle *Calligrapha (Zygogramma) bicolorata* to Spread from Original Release Sites to Parthenium-Invaded Areas in Ethiopia

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The invasive weed Parthenium (*Parthenium hysterophorus* L.) is now widespread in crop fields, pastures, towns, and rural homesteads throughout Ethiopia. In the more than four decades since its introduction into Ethiopia, it has expanded into all regions of the country. Its continued spread has severely affected food production, livestock grazing areas, human health, and the livability of rural homesteads.

Many people are allergic to parthenium, and its pollen aggravates respiratory illnesses. Rural communities are especially vulnerable because the weed is abundant around homes and in agricultural fields, leading to constant exposure. Livestock are also affected. During the dry season, when parthenium may be the only green plant available, animals are forced to graze on it. Cows that consume parthenium produce milk with a tainted flavor. This milk often fetches lower market prices, and children usually refuse to drink it due to its altered taste - posing both economic and nutritional challenges for rural families.

Parthenium competes aggressively with crops for nutrients, moisture, and sunlight. It germinates at various times throughout the cropping season and persists, competing with crops from emergence to harvest. Yield reductions have been documented in major staple crops, including teff and sorghum. The weed also invades pasturelands, particularly those that are overgrazed. Its presence displaces desirable forage species, reducing grazing capacity. In addition, parthenium releases allelopathic chemicals that suppress the growth of surrounding plants. This capacity to outcompete and displace other vegetation threatens Ethiopia's rich and diverse natural ecosystems.

Hand weeding was the primary method of parthenium control for many years. However, recognizing the limitations of mechanical control, Ethiopia initiated a biological control programme in 2005 to reduce the weed's impact and slow its spread. This effort was implemented through a project led by Virginia State University (VSU), funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Integrated Pest Management Innovation Lab at Virginia Tech. The project ran from 2005 to 2022 and was directed at VSU by Dr. Wondimagegnehu Mersie.

Following rigorous host-specificity testing and regulatory approval, two biological control agents were mass-reared and released into Ethiopia beginning in 2014. These are the leaf-feeding beetle *Calligrapha bicolorata* (syn. *Zygogramma bicolorata*) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) and the stem-boring weevil *Listronotus setosipennis* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae). The leaf-feeding beetle was primarily

released in areas receiving steady prolonged rainfall, while the stem-boring weevil was targeted for release in relatively drier regions.

During this project period, one of the major release areas was at Arba Minch in southern Ethiopia. Large numbers - often amounting to several thousands - of *Calligrapha bicolorata* adult beetles were mass-reared at Guder and Wollenchiti and transported to Arba Minch for release in parthenium-infested farms.

After initial releases, the beetle began spreading naturally. To support further expansion during this project, a rearing facility was established at the Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Health Clinic Center at Arba Minch in 2019. From 2019 through to the end of the USAID-funded project in 2022, beetles reared at this and other facilities were redistributed to multiple locations in southern Ethiopia, including: Dawro Tercha, Deramalo, Kucha, Mirab Abaya and Zala. The leaf-feeding beetle was also released in western coffee-growing areas, including Guraferda, Koyi, Oral Daget and Yeki. In most of these locations, *C. bicolorata* has successfully established and is now spreading independently.

Although USAID funding concluded in 2022, efforts to expand the distribution of the beetle have continued through collaboration with local agricultural offices. Particular attention has been given to introducing the beetle into parthenium-infested areas that are geographically isolated by mountain ranges and other natural barriers, from original release sites.

Fig. 1. Parthenium plants infested with the leaf-feeding beetle *C. bicolorata* (adults, larvae, and egg clusters) being harvested and packed into sacks on January 12, 2026, for transport and release in central, southern, and western Ethiopia, where agricultural fields are heavily infested with the invasive weed *P. hysterophorus*.

On January 12, 2026, staff from the Oromia Agricultural Bureau collected *C. bicolorata* from Amibara Farm, where the beetle was first released in 2019. Parthenium plants bearing adult beetles, larvae, and egg clusters were cut at the base and placed into sacks sprayed with a 2% bleach solution. The plants were lightly sprayed as well. The sacks were loosely tied and transported to central, western, and southern Ethiopia for redistribution in heavily infested agricultural fields.

This field-collection method eliminates the need for laboratory rearing, saving both time and resources. It is economical, efficient, and requires minimal staff training, making it a practical and scalable approach for expanding biological control of parthenium across Ethiopia.

The establishment and spread of *Calligrapha bicolorata* represents a significant step forward in Ethiopia's long-term management of *Parthenium hysterophorus*. Continued redistribution of the biological control agents from well-established populations to new infestation zones offers a cost-effective and sustainable strategy to protect agricultural productivity, livestock health, and rural livelihoods across the country.

Biocontrol related events

Biopesticides Europe 2026 brings together the full biological crop protection value chain to focus on turning regulatory change, climate pressure and market demand into real, scalable opportunities for biologicals. Across two days on the 10th & 11th June in Amsterdam, the conference examines how evolving EU rules, the withdrawal of key chemical actives and growing sustainability expectations are reshaping R&D priorities, product portfolios and commercial strategies for both traditional agrochemical players and specialist biologicals companies. Delegates will hear practical case studies on building robust, field-ready biopesticide products, navigating complex regulatory pathways, and driving confident adoption at farm level through better performance, positioning and stewardship.
The programme blends strategic market insight with technical depth, addressing issues such as microbial stability, formulation and fermentation advances, data and field trial requirements, and how to position biologicals as reliable tools alongside (or instead of) conventional chemistry. Sessions will also explore logistics, storage and distribution constraints, commercial models with distributors and retailers, and the realities of integrating biologicals into crop protection programmes in different European markets. Conference Website: https://www.wplgroup.com/aci/event/biopesticides-europe/ Conference Agenda: https://marketing.acieu.net/acton/media/6204/Biopesticides

For More Info & Registration:
Name: Rohan Baryah – Marketing & Delegate Sales
Phone: + 48 (0)61 646 7022 Email: rbaryah@acieu.net
Members are entitled to a 10% discount until the conference date. To claim this discount, please contact ROHAN BARYAH on rbaryah@acieu.net and quote CPEe9MKTRB.

7th International Symposium on Biological Control of Arthropods
Nairobi, Kenya, from Monday 26 to Friday 30 October 2026

The organisers are soliciting ideas for scientific session subjects, potential speakers, and volunteers to organize sessions and recruit speakers. Session subjects should be conceptual, and the speakers should stimulate ideas by presenting new information. Therefore, all presentations should present original project data rather than overviews, summaries, or well-known material. The scientific outputs from postgraduate students and postdocs are particularly welcome.

Session subjects should include the various approaches to biological control, e.g. conservation, augmentation, and importation of natural enemy species for the control of arthropod targets. The subjects can also encompass various transversal issues, including the uptake of biological control and socio-economic impact. We also invite session subject submissions that are designed to enhance inter-disciplinary collaboration.

Based on earlier experiences, there will be up to 16 scientific session and 2 poster session time slots available (each 105 min). In each time slot, 5 speakers could be scheduled each with 12 minutes for presenting and 7 minutes for discussion. The 105 min time slots could be also used to organize panel discussions. It should be noted that the symposium has no concurrent sessions.

Please submit your scientific session topic proposal now online through the newly established conference-specific website for ISBCA 2026 (www.isbca2026.com) **but latest until Friday 6 March 2026 COB CET**. Please use this link to enter directly the call for sessions: https://isbca2026.com/en/call-for-sessions

Please see the complete lists of upcoming events related to biocontrol activities at the website of IOBC Global: www.IOBC-Global.org, and of IOBC-WPRS: www.IOBC-WPRS.org/meetings

Funding opportunity

IUBS (International Union of Biological Sciences) has announced the call for applications for its next triennial scientific programmes and welcomes proposals addressing international and interdisciplinary challenges in biology. **Deadline 31st March 2026.** Detailed information and application procedures are available in the respective forms or on this page. Funding is available across the world in a variety of biological research topics .

Nomination form
IUBS triennial application

1. Purpose of IUBS Scientific Programmes

IUBS scientific programmes aim to address international and interdisciplinary biological questions through collaborative activities, workshops, and publications. They serve as seed-funded initiatives expected to leverage additional external support.

2. Programme Types

- New programmes for the upcoming triennium
- Renewals of existing programmes
- Programmes derived from past or ongoing initiatives

Regional sections of IOBC Global

APRS

Asia-Pacific Regional Section (APRS)
Contact: Dr. Toni Withers; E-mail:
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ATRS

Afrotropical Regional Section (ATRS)
Contact: Dr. Désiré Gnanvossou,; E-mail:
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East Palearctic Regional Section (EPRS)
Contact: Eduard A. Sadomov, Moscow, Russia; E-mail:
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EPRS

NRS

Nearctic Regional Section (NRS)
Contact: Ricky Lara; E-mail: jlara007@ucr.edu

NTRS

Neotropical Regional Section (NTRS)
Contact: M. Fernanda Cingolani; E-mail: fernandacingolani@cepave.edu.ar

WPRS

West Palearctic Regional Section (WPRS)
Contact: Dr. Paula Baptista
info@iobc-wprs.org

IOBC-Global Working Groups

Please check the IOBC Global website for meeting dates and access.

Mass Rearing and Quality Assurance (MRQA)

Contact: Rose Buitenhuis; Email: Rose.Buitenhuis@vinelandresearch.com;
Website: https://www.mrqa.eu

Ecology of Aphidophaga

Contact: J.P. Michaud; Email: jpmi@ksu.edu

Biological Control and Management of Eupatorieae Weeds

Contact: Michael Day; Email: tropicalweedbiocontrol@gmail.com

International Working Group on *Ostrinia* and other maize pests (IWGO)

Contact: Ulli Kuhlmann; Email: u.kuhlmann@cabi.org

Biological Control and Management of *Parthenium* Weed

Contact: Lorraine Strathie; Email: strathiel@arc.agric.za

http://apwss.org.in/APWSS_Working_Group_Newsletter.aspx

Biological Control of Diamondback Moth & other Crucifer Insects

Contact: R. Srinivasan; Email: srini.ramasamy@worldveg.org

IOBC Global Cactus Working Group

Contact: Iain Paterson; Email: i.paterson@ru.ac.za; website: www.ru.ac.za/centreforbiologicalcontrol/globalcactusworkinggroupgcwg

Working Group: Classical Weed Biological Control (CWBC)

Contact: Harriet Hinz (CABI, Switzerland), h.hinz@cabi.org
Website: https://www.iobc-global.org/global_sg_Classical_Weed_BC.html

Study Group: Biological control of insect pests of Solanaceous Crops (IOBC-BiCoSol)

Contact: Yulin Gao (Institute of Plant Protection, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences) gaoyulin@caas.cn

IOBC Global Commission on Biological Control and Access and Benefit Sharing

Contact: Martin Hill; Email: m.hill@ru.ac.za

Join IOBC

Membership in an IOBC regional group is open to all individuals and all organizations, public or private, who desire to promote the objectives of biological control. There are four categories of membership:

- Individual Membership is open to all individuals engaged or interested in biological control.
- Institutional Membership is open to any institution, including government departments, academies of science, universities, institutes and societies participating in biocontrol activities.
- Supporting Membership is open to any person or institution interested in promoting the objectives of the Organization.
- Honorary Membership may be conferred by the Council to anyone who has made outstanding contributions to biological control.

For more information and application forms:
http://www.iobc-global.org/membership.html