




## I Jornada Técnica del Grupo de Protección Vegetal - EEMAC

### I Technical Conference of the Plant Protection Group - EEMAC: introduction

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The losses that pests, weeds and diseases cause to the crops used for human food have been permanent threats in every human attempt to achieve a harvest to meet their needs. Obtaining fruits and grains that are sufficient and of acceptable quality requires effort and knowledge not only of the crop, but of several other organisms that interact in a complex way within the productive environment. Since the middle of the last century, methods to mitigate losses have been based mainly on chemical control. Phytosanitary interventions are part of the success or failure of almost all production cycles. However, maintaining a certain sanitary status in plants should not conflict with food safety, consumer health or resource sustainability. In this way, the need for integrated approaches that accompany traditional control is imposed, with varied and constantly innovating tools that explore all possibilities, always giving priority to the least aggressive with the agroecosystem. This approach presents a great demand for research, development and constant expansion of knowledge.

Plant protection consists of the strategies and knowledge that malherbology, agricultural entomology and phytopathology have found to act in defense of plants of economic interest. It is common for each of the problems addressed by these disciplines to be presented to the community of producers and technicians separately, in isolation, which leads to considering the production system in an excessively fragmented way. Sometimes, this approach can facilitate the understanding and rapid adoption of certain management practices efficiently. But the difficulties in crop health present themselves in the real productive world as a complex, non-compartmentalised network phenomenon, with multiple ramifications and sometimes unexpected associations. Crop protection, as we understand it in the Faculty of Agronomy, assimilates this particularity, and includes the link between the different sciences and approaches. By contrasting the approaches and knowledge of each of the disciplines, it is clearly appreciated that they have a lot in common. The limitations and difficulties, as well





as possible solutions, have a shared background in the same region.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Technical Conference of the Plant Protection Group - EEMAC (*I Jornada Técnica del Grupo de Protección Vegetal - EEMAC*) emerged as a way to express in the same message the possibilities of crop management that are inspired by similar principles. Although there are aspects that can be understood as situations inherent to each of the disciplines, even in those particularities there is a common thread with the production and the commitment to the care of current resources, and the concern to maintain a productive environment that continues to provide services in the future.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Technical Conference of the Plant Protection Group - EEMAC took place on June 1, 2023 at the Dr. Mario A. Cassinoni Experimental Station in Paysandú, Uruguay. This meeting was organized by the Plant Protection Group of the EEMAC, under the slogan that "Crop protection can and must travel a sustainable path". The event consisted of 5 exhibitions, a poster presentation, and a final round table where the concerns and main messages of each exhibition were discussed with the participation of the public. The meeting had a total of 150 attendees and the participation of technicians from INIA, the Faculty of Agronomy, the Cenur Litoral Norte, and authorities from the MGAP and the Municipality of Paysandú. This meeting was the beginning of a relationship between the EEMAC Plant Protection

Group and the community of technicians and producers from all over the country interested in responsible production.

The topics addressed in the Conference were aimed at pointing out challenging situations or promising alternatives that must be approached with knowledge and commitment in the near future. The presentations focused on the fair appreciation of service crops in weed control; the implications of the rational use of pre-emergent herbicides, especially in the presence of stubble; the importance of the landscape and the principles of pest management, even in the face of new species in our systems; the objective evaluation of the climate context in disease management, and the importance of quantifying pesticide residues in harvested products. But beyond each topic, the focus remains centered in the idea of sustainability, in considering all the possibilities that promote the health of the environment and the conservation of resources.

We hope that all attendees and those who access the extended abstracts will get the message that the path of efficient and responsible crop protection is under permanent construction and depends on the effort of researchers, technicians, and producers throughout the region. The EEMAC is a meeting point for all those having those aspirations.