

2015 Deputy Administrator's Safeguarding Award: International Services Dominican Republic Mediterranean Fruit Fly Detection and Control

This team worked quickly to confirm rumors of Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) presence in the Dominican Republic. Their swift action increased transparency and accelerated the Dominican Republic's official declaration of the presence of Medfly and establishment of a Medfly eradication program.

To address the consequences of this damaging pest, the team needed to persuade local counterparts and represent our Agency's mission during frequent, contentious meetings with officials at the highest levels including the Ambassador, the Agricultural Minister, and even the President of the Dominican Republic. During these meetings, the team garnered political support and funding and smoothed over controversies among local government, producers, and the press.

Within just a few months, this team organized a multinational and multidisciplinary team to advise and train local personnel. As a result, the team led the effort to increase the trapping array by over 220-fold, destroy over 500 tons of fruit, chemically treat 60,000 acres, and release over 200 million sterile male Medflies. This rapid action and perseverance dramatically improved detection and control of Medfly in the Dominican Republic and greatly reduced the threat of this pest to U.S. agriculture.

NAME/AGENCY

Ms. Paula Morales/USDA-APHIS-IS

Ms. Miriam Reyes/USDA-APHIS-IS

Ms. Ana Sánchez/USDA-APHIS-IS

Dr. Robert Tanaka/USDA-APHIS-IS

Dr. Eric Hoffman (retired)

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