

58th APS Caribbean Division Meeting—a Great Success



The Caribbean Division of the American Phytopathological Society held its 58th annual meeting last May 6-10, 2019 in Varadero, Cuba. The meeting was attended by 135 people, 64 Cubans and 71 plant pathologists from 19 countries. The APS-CD meeting was organized in conjunction with the Latin American Society of Phytopathology (ALF) and the Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA). The meeting started with a welcome reception, and continued with student research competition sessions, poster sessions, technical sessions, a field tour, and award session and a well-attended closing ceremony. There was also a declaration of the year 2020 as The [International Year of Plant Health](#).

There were 132 paper contributions in several different sessions including etiology and epidemiology, genetic resistance, biocontrol and plant disease management. Session topics were the identification and characterization of fungi, virus, bacteria, nematode and phytoplasma; interaction between viruses and vectors; phytosanitary management of possible pathogens that are a threat to the Caribbean region with special emphasis in *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Race 4 in bananas; modeling and differential equations to support plant protection; plant growth promoting microorganisms; biocontrol products being used in the region; and diversity of nematode population as indicators of soil health.

The field tour focused on the management of banana diseases (soil-borne and foliar diseases) with fungal biocontrol products (*Pochonia chlamydosporia* var. *catenulata* and *Trichoderma asperellum*). The tour also included a visit to a tissue culture production

facility for the micro propagation of banana, pineapple, potato, sugarcane and some tropical fruit and forest trees; a visit to a small grower farm was also included as well as a tour of the capital city, Havana.

A graduate student research competition was also organized at the APS-CD. Students from six different countries showcased their research findings. They competed for a monetary award and a membership to APS and APS-CD for one year. **William Groover**, Auburn University, and **Lidia Chang Sidorchuk**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), tied for the first place award for their presentations “Plant-growth promoting rhizobacteria: A potential management strategy for *Meloidogyne* spp. on turfgrass” and “Selection of promising bean genotypes resistant to BGYMV with the molecular marker bgm-1,” respectively. **Carlos Alberto Salomón Solarte** (Universidad de Nariño, Colombia) placed second for his presentation “Serological, molecular, and microscopic virus detection in *Canna edulis* Ker. in Nariño, Colombia.” In the poster competition, **Mylene Corzo Lopez**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), placed first with her poster “Current situation of *Xanthomonas* spp. and *Phaseolus vulgaris* L. pathosystem in the west region of Cuba.”

A travel award was presented to **Lina Miranda Diaz**, Universidad Industrial de Santander, Colombia to attend the APS Caribbean Division meeting. An APS and APS-CD membership for one year was given to the following students for their excellent presentations during the oral and poster competition: **Elianne Piloto Sardiñas**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA); **Heydi Gonzalez Alvarez**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health; **Tristan C. Paulino**,

University of Guam; **Yanisia Duarte Leal**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA); **Marbely del Toro Benitez**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA); and **Lina Miranda Diaz**, Universidad Industrial de Santander, Colombia.

Many thanks to the local meeting organizers, **Yamila Martinez Zubiar**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA) and APS-CD past president, and **Nivian Montes de Oca Martinez**, Director of the Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), for the time dedicated to the meeting planning and logistics, for sponsoring many of the event activities, for welcoming everybody in Varadero, and for the excellent idea to have organized the meeting in Varadero, a gorgeous place.

Many thanks also to other meeting organizers: **Ronald French-Monar**, USDA-APHIS-PPQ-Field Operations and president of the Latin American Phytopathological Association; **Angel Rebollos Alvirer**, Universidad Autónoma Chapingo and past APS-CD Secretary-Treasurer; and **Gilberto Olaya**, Syngenta and APS Division Forum Representative; **Kira Bowen**, Auburn University and APS president for presenting an update from the APS council; and **Benedicto Martinez Coca**, Cuban National Center for Animal and Plant Health (CENSA), **Carlos Urias**, Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA); and **Gilberto Olaya**, Syngenta and APS Division Forum Representative, for judging at the Graduate Student Research Competition.

We plan to have another great meeting in 2020 and expect to see again APS Caribbean Division members, other APS members and plant pathologist from different parts of the world. ■



APS-CD graduate student competition winners (left to right) First place, Lidia Chang Sidorchuk and William Groover; Second place, Carlos Alberto Salomón Solarte; First place poster presentation, Mylene Corzo Lopez.