

# EXTENSION'S ROLE IN CARIBBEAN AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center) and the Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (SCCAHS) conducted a multilingual (English, Spanish and French) survey to assess the health and safety needs of Caribbean agricultural workers. The survey was conducted in February and March 2025.

## Caribbean Agricultural Health & Safety

The online survey was distributed to members of the Caribbean Agricultural Extension Providers Network (CAEPNet) and the Caribbean Food Crops Society (CFCS). Eighty-eight CAEPNet and CFCS members from 18 Caribbean countries and U.S. territories participated in the study.

### Health and Safety Concerns

Pesticide exposure, biosecurity risks and chronic diseases were consistently cited as the most pressing health and safety concerns affecting Caribbean agricultural workers. Participants also highlighted improper pesticide handling, the prevalence of disease and stress as further issues of concern.



**Pesticide Exposure**



**Biosecurity Risks**



**Chronic Disease**

### Extension in Agricultural Health and Safety

Respondents identified three primary areas where Extension in the Caribbean should focus its agricultural health and safety efforts: Enhancing the quality of life in rural communities, Providing education on agroecological alternatives and Improving community preparedness for natural disasters.

The majority of respondents (89%) indicated that Extension plays a moderate to very important role in disseminating information related to agricultural health and safety.

## Barriers to Addressing Agricultural Health & Safety

The most significant barriers to addressing agricultural health and safety in the region were reported as inadequate funding, limited access to reliable information and persistent difficulties with pest and disease monitoring. Respondents also noted additional barriers, including the effects of climate change, limited healthcare access, insufficient pesticide training, lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and concerns about safe pesticide storage.



**Inadequate funding**



**Access to Reliable Information**



**Pest and Disease Monitoring**