

First sick olive trees of “Xylella fastidiosa” in France



The detection of “Xylella fastidiosa” for the first time in two ornamental olive trees in France next to the Italian border has generated concern among farmers, who ask for caution when applying measures to prevent the spread, in particular the uprooting of trees.

"Before we start, let's be cautious," he said Saturday in statements to France 2 channel Michel Dessus, president of the Chamber of Agriculture of the department of the Maritime Alps, where those two cases have been identified in the cities of **Menton and Antibes**.

Dessus expressed concern about the consequences that this plague can have on the sector. The two sick olive trees are ornamental, have symptoms of being dried and will be uprooted and destroyed in the coming days, as well as other bacteria-sensitive plants will be uprooted in a "fighting perimeter" that has been established around them, according to the Ministry of French Agriculture.

The Ministry said in a statement on Friday that a surveillance perimeter of five kilometers of radius for all plants has also been launched.

Antibes, which lies between Cannes and Nice, and Menton - on the border with Italy - are already in an area defined for the “Xylella fastidiosa” since 2015, when the bacteria were first detected in

France, but in other different plants to the olive tree

According to official data, this bacterium that is potentially deadly for dozens of plant species (such as the olive tree, the vine or the almond tree) is present in Corsica and in 19 municipalities in the departments of Var and the Maritime Alps.

Two positive after 5,100 olive samples

Since 2015, samples of **5,100 olive trees** had been taken, without having obtained any positive up to these two specimens.

Menton corresponds to the same bacteria that is present in Italy. Hence the insistence of the Department of Agriculture to ask professionals, but also individuals, not to transport plants on their trips in France or abroad.

The minister, Didier Guillaume, said he takes "this health alert very seriously" and looks forward to the cooperation of owners, individuals or professionals with public services to "**strengthen surveillance measures and ensure the destruction of sensitive plants.**"