

Fall Army Worm Management Factsheet

Introduction

The fall army worm is a new invasive pest in Zimbabwe which has now spread across the country. This pest multiplies very quickly and attacks a variety of crops but particularly prefers maize and sorghum, causing a lot of damage to the leaves and cobs in the field.



Waste material produced by larvae (frass)



Damage to maize

Identification *(Know what the pest looks like.)*



1

- Moths lay eggs in clusters of up to 200 eggs per cluster.
- Egg clusters are covered with greyish scales or bristles.
- Egg clusters are laid on the leaves. Found on both sides.



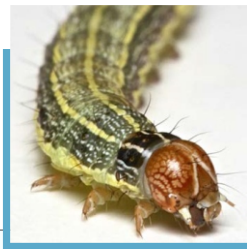
2

- In 2 to 3 days the eggs hatch into tiny larvae.
- Their feeding results in semi-transparent patches on leaves.



4

- When the caterpillar is fully grown it drops to the ground and forms a pupa (resting stage).
- It will then emerge after 8 days as a moth.
- At this point the cycle begins again as moths move on to lay eggs.



3

- The larvae grow very quickly to become caterpillars. They eat young leaves in the funnel. Later, if not controlled, they eat the young sheath leaves of the cob.
- The caterpillars are greenish or brown with stripes along the lengths of their bodies.
- They have a visible inverted “Y” shape on their heads, and 4 dots towards the end of the body.

What should farmers do?

1 Prevent infestation

- Ensure you plant early at the onset of the first effective rains. This way you can minimise potential loss in the event of infestation by avoiding the immigration of the moths.
- Inter-crop maize with crops such as cowpeas, pigeon pea or lablab.
- **Get into the habit of scouting for the presence of the pest in your fields.** The idea is to detect the pest early within time to prevent damage to crops. **Start scouting early when the crop is at the two or three leaf stage.**
- Scout your fields for the pest 2 to 3 times every week.
- In each scouting session, select 20 plants in each

of 5 randomly selected different locations and examine the plants fully.

- In scouting, your goal is to detect the pest while it is still at the egg stage so that you may destroy the eggs before they become larvae (larvae and caterpillars are the threat to your crops).
- **Once you find eggs, go through your entire field and crush the eggs.**
- If you destroy the eggs, the pest may not infest your field.
- **Continue scouting your fields.** (Destroy egg clusters.) If you find crop damage such as holes on the leaves or in the funnel, this means caterpillars are now present and you should take control measures with haste.

2 Take control measures

- In your scouting, if 10 to 15% (10 to 15 plants) of the plants are damaged, you have to urgently procure pesticides and apply to your crops.
- Be diligent and consistent with scouting your fields for the pest. Early detection, especially at larvae stage is easier to control with Group 1 pesticides in order to minimise potential loss because of the pest.
- Newly hatched larvae are quite tiny (3 to 4mm in length) and difficult to see.
- *Damage to leaves in the form of leaf scraping or window panning and holes shows that the larvae are present.*



- Spray your crops to get rid of the pest.
- At this point you may spray young caterpillars with neem based products.
- This will prevent them from entering the ears or the whorl.
- Prevent them from entering the funnel and in the long run protect the cob.
- If you detect the presence of the pest early you can spray well in time to minimise loss.

3 Use of Pesticides

- Purchase recommended pesticides from registered dealers.
- Follow pesticide use and application guidelines as shown on the label.
- Use protective clothing when spraying.



- Apply full cover spray.
- Use a hollow cone nozzle for spraying over the funnel and covering the leaves.
- Spray early in the morning or in the evening.
- Rotate chemicals from different groups.
- If starting at the early stages of the crop (2 to 4 leaf stages) start with one spray from Group 1, then rotate sprays from Group 2 to 4.
- If the crop has passed the 4 leaf stage, use sprays from group 2 to 4.

Group 1	
● Bulldock G	● Decis
● Karate	● Vantex

Group 2	
● Super Dash	● Blast Super
● Emma	● Tide
● Prove	

Group 3	
● Steward	● Indoxacarb
● Lambda	● Ecotex

Group 4	
● Coragen	● Ampligo
● Belt	

IF YOU SUSPECT OR OBSERVE FALL ARMY WORM IN YOUR FIELD, ADVISE YOUR NEAREST AGRITEX OFFICE.