



# SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE FALL ARMYWORM IN AFRICA: FAO PROGRAMME FOR ACTION

The invasive insect pest, Fall Armyworm, FAW (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) continues to spread across Africa, affecting millions of smallholder maize producers. In addition to its preferred maize, FAW can feed on more than 80 plant species, including rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane, vegetable crops and cotton. In drier regions of Africa it is being reported increasingly in sorghum fields. FAW can cause significant yield losses if not well managed or in the absence of natural biological control. **Unlike quarantine pests under official control or insects with gregarious behaviour (e.g. some locust species), FAW does not lend itself to official, centralized control. FAW is a farmers' problem and the farmers need help in sustainably managing this new pest.**

FAO has worked with partners in developing a coordinated FAW Partnership Framework that takes into account all FAW response interventions. FAO will take an active role in coordinating all partners' activities, plans and approaches to provide sustainable solutions to the FAW challenge.

FAO has prepared a Programme for Action in the context of that Framework. This Programme presents the part of the Framework actions that FAO is prepared to directly coordinate, administer and implement based on its comparative strengths. Many of the activities include the active participation of partners and service providers. FAO's Programme is divided into six components:

## 1. Management of FAW: Immediate Recommendations and Actions

Smallholder family maize farmers, especially in Mesoamerica have been managing FAW in their maize fields for centuries. So immediate recommendations for smallholders in Sub-Saharan Africa should start there. Training and awareness raising material are being prepared to help farmers learn about FAWs biology and ecology and best practices for its management. These messages and concepts must be fine-tuned at a local level and then used by Farmer Field School training, national extension programmes, farmers' associations, and mass communication campaigns.

## 2. Short-term Research Priorities

In addition to immediate recommendations and actions, a number of areas should be short-term research priorities. They could be tested both on research stations, and through action-research with farmers, for instance through Farmer Field Schools and other related farmer-led extension approaches. In addition, FAO proposes to enter into partnership with at least ten national agricultural universities or national agricultural research institutes to carry out a series of coordinated research topics. South-South cooperation, especially among researchers and practitioners from the Americas and counterparts in Africa will be promoted.

## 3. Communications & Training

A mass farmer information and training campaign will be deployed to offer a first management response to FAW. The campaign will promote management measures that have been used and reported to be effective in reducing FAW infestation as referred to in the first component. Going to scale in disseminating the management options to wider numbers of smallholder farmers, will require working through existing structures and leveraging opportunities that exist to reach large numbers of smallholder farmers. This component is aimed at strengthening the country capacity to sustainably



manage FAW and prevent further outbreaks over time. Two elements are central to these outcomes: farmer education and innovative research.

## 4. Monitoring and Early Warning

The capacity of many African countries to detect and react promptly to new pest invasions, through regular monitoring, is often limited. A Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System will be established in African countries where Fall Armyworm is currently present as well as those countries that are potentially threatened by the pest. The system will have two objectives and consist of two primary components: in-country monitoring and monitoring at the community (farmer) level and early warning that encompasses the community (farmer), district, national, sub-regional and regional levels.

## 5. Policy & Regulatory Support

Highly Hazardous Pesticides have been reported to be used in large quantities in response to FAW infestations. Among all pesticide products on the market, a relatively small number have an extremely high potential to severely impair human health and the environment. The cost effectiveness of these products is always negative when the externalities on public health and environmental degradation are

considered. This is true especially in developing countries and economies in transition, where proper risk mitigation measures, such as protective clothing or properly maintained application equipment, may not be in place. Low-risk alternatives exist, especially bio-pesticides, which might however not be readily available to farmers in Africa.

Regulatory actions to ensure that products authorized and used do not pose unacceptable adverse effects and that facilitate the registration of low-risk products are key to the long term sustainability of FAW management. Likewise, it is essential that innovative products, such as bio-pesticides are quickly reviewed and registered for use.

## 6. Coordination of FAW Management in Africa

Coordination of FAW response in Africa is needed at multiple levels: local, national, regional or Africa-wide. The Programme will be monitored via FAO's standard monitoring and evaluation procedures. In addition, a Programme Advisory Committee will be established with members representing the key stakeholders. The African Union will have an important role in overall coordination.

BUDGET SUMMARY	USD ('000)
1. Management of FAW: Immediate Recommendations & Actions	4.250
2. Short-term Research Priorities	20.500
3. Communications & Training	38.000
4. Monitoring & Early Warning	16.500
5. Policy & Regulatory Support	3.300
6. Coordination	5.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87.550</b>

Prepared by FAO on October 2017

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