



Fall Armyworm Control in Action Newsletter

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FAO FAW Secretariat organizes technical training webinar for Asia and NENA

Highlights

A survey of **FAO FAW Technical Committee (TC) members**, taking stock of their areas of expertise, ongoing work and areas of interest to help in different Geo-zones/demonstration countries has been conducted. The responding members are now being connected to the National Task Forces of the demonstration countries to directly support GA implementation in these countries.

Implementation

Publication of the new “**Prevention, preparedness, and response guidelines for *Spodoptera frugiperda* (FAW)**” is scheduled for the end of July 2021 and will form the basis for future training. These guidelines will also be used in upcoming webinars, including one scheduled for 28 July 2021.

FAO, through its farmer field schools (FFS), has trained over 400 FFS master trainers (who train FFS facilitators) on FAW management and over 15 300 FFS facilitators in over 30 countries in recent years. Ongoing activities under the Global Action include developing work plans and budgets with a number of demonstration and pilot countries. The approach will see FFS training plus short field trainings through farmers’ visits to FFS; in addition,

In collaboration with members of the Global Action (GA) for FAW Control’s Technical Committee, two regional webinars on FAW monitoring and early warning systems were conducted as a part of the GA technical training series in June 2021. The webinars aimed to improve understanding of how a well-structured FAW monitoring and early warning system could contribute to FAW integrated pest management (IPM). The first webinar, 16 June 2021, focused on Asia and NENA, with 114 participants, and included experts from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (CAAS), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), France’s National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE), and the FAO Representative to the Philippines. The second, 23 June 2021, focused on Africa with 118 participants along with experts from Pennsylvania State University (PSU), the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy (NIBIO), and the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience (CABI). Multiple systems for FAW monitoring and early warning were reviewed with a strong conclusion that monitoring and early warning are integral parts of a successful IPM programme.



Inspection of maize harvest damaged by FAW in farmers’ fields in Sri Lanka

there will be communications and outreach campaigns, and e-learning modules on FAW to complement the field work.

Communications and Partnerships

Scientists working on FAW management in agroecology, biological control, plant breeding, biological, botanical and chemical pesticides, monitoring and IPM, will present their latest results during the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF)-organized event “[Developing smallholder-oriented integrated pest management strategies for fall armyworm \(*Spodoptera frugiperda* Smith\) management](#)”. The conference runs from 24 August 2021 to 26 August 2021. Registration and call for abstracts can be found on the organizer’s website.

FAO FAW Secretariat, in collaboration with Technical Committee (TC) members, organized a **global technical webinar on nature-based solutions** on 19 May 2021. Some 150 participants engaged with experts from three organizations – World Agroforestry



Field inspection of late instar larva.

Center (ICRAF), International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe), and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) – as they reviewed biological technologies that can reduce reliance on chemical pesticides while controlling FAW in the field.

New Developments

Insecticide resistant gene mutations are found in a relatively high frequency in the invasive FAW populations in Asia/Africa. This points to the need for insecticide resistance monitoring in the regions. <https://www.mdpi.com/2075-4450/12/5/468>

In a recent report, CABI estimated that **FAW costs African economies as high as USD 9.4 billion annually**. <https://cabiagbio.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s43170-021-00038-7>

Field stories

FAW threatens food security, livelihoods but farmers in Sri Lanka have solutions

Farmers in Sri Lanka have dramatically cut their losses and increased yields in ways that could provide a model for others. Maize losses fell to as little as two percent in 2020 – particularly remarkable, given that Sri Lanka also saw its highest-ever yield last year amid a record-high level of maize cultivation. The South Asian country attributes its success to an enormous effort in community preparedness and involvement that built trust at the lo-

cal level. That was combined with a mass-media communications campaign reaching right into farmers’ homes to boost awareness of how to control the frightening new and highly destructive FAW pest, while protecting and maintaining biodiversity.

Malawi farmers testing IPM solutions through farmer field schools

Farmers in Malawi are working to identify and validate affordable and accessible integrated pest management (IPM) solutions for fall armyworm (FAW) control through farmer field school (FFS) research in several districts of the country. Lessons learnt through these studies are being shared through FFS field days with community-based facilitators (CBFs) who will then pass the information on to their local farmers. These field days provide an interactive and experiential platform for knowledge exchanges and with each of the 64 CBFs invited to a recent field day set to share lessons with their group members, these lessons could ultimately reach almost 1 100 farmers on how to combat FAW. The project is supported by the European Union-funded KULIMA programme, and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Malawi.



Malawi’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture Agnes Nkusankhoma MP. reviews botanical solutions for FAW management.



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Contact information:

Plant Production and Protection - Natural Resources and Sustainable Production
Email: Fall-Armyworm@fao.org
<http://www.fao.org/fall-armyworm/global-action/en/>
<https://www.ippc.int/en/the-global-action-for-fall-armyworm-control/>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy