



Fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*)

The fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is in the same family with our common African Armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*). It differs from the common armyworm in that it has a high reproductive rate of about 900–1000 eggs per female, a relatively short generation time of 30 days and a good dispersal ability. All these attributes make it a pest with high colonising ability.

Morphological Characteristics

Fall armyworm vary light tan to black with a wider dark stripe and a wavy yellow red stripe on along each side. Fall armyworm resemble both armyworm and earworm but fall army worm has a white inverted “Y” mark on the front of the dark head. It has four dark spots arranged in a square on top of the 8th abdominal segment.



Damage

Very early symptoms of fall army worm resemble those of stalk borer infestation. Small holes and window pane feeding on the leaves emerging from the centre leaves (whorl). Larger fall army worm larvae consume a large amount of the leaf resulting in ragged appearance and is usually found deep at the centre of the leaves and protected from the insecticide applications. Unlike army worm; fall army worm feeds both in the day and at night but it is more active in the morning and late afternoon.



Management

Scouting

Effective control is achieved with early detection of the pest. Growers should constantly check the fields and if the pest is present it should be controlled when the larvae are still young

Chemical Sprays

Alternated full cover sprays of insecticides (pyrethroids, carbamates and organophosphates) such as Karate, Blast super, Bull dock, Decis forte, Coragen, Trigger, Lambda, Carbaryl and Ampligo is recommended. The chemicals should be applied early morning or late in the day when the fall army worm is active.