

FALL ARMYWORM UPDATE - (Courtesy of Seed and Grain Readiness and Response)

10th March 2023

Key Points:

- The insecticide Sparta® is now on label for both aerial and ground applications for the control of Fall Armyworm on maize and sweetcorn crops. Consult with your advisor and avoid the use of insecticides that are ineffective on Fall Armyworm and potentially harmful to beneficial insects.
- The total number of finds for the 2022-23 season has now reached 128, an increase of only one find. This could indicate a slowing of its spread at this stage of the season.
- Only four FAW moths were found in traps in Northland this week, low numbers of larvae of varying sizes have also been found in the region.
- The wet condition of many of the crops has been of main concern, hence scouting and reporting may not be thorough, which is fully understandable.
- Maize and sweet corn crops in areas not affected by floods should only be scouted where possible and when safe to do so.
- Many crops have been or are close to harvest around the country meaning a reduced preferred food source, it is important to stay vigilant and scout neighbouring paddocks in the absence of maize and sweetcorn as FAW will predate a large variety of crops.
- There continue to be reports of FAW larvae being parasitized by the parasitic wasp *Cotesia sp.* which will help contain the numbers.
- We have received questions on thresholds for economic damage. While we work on producing NZ-specific information, international (Australian) guidelines suggest that at whorl stages and above there should be at least 20% of plants with larvae present and/or signs of damage on 75% of plants. Scout crops (if safe) by using a “W” pattern, FAW tends to feed along rows.
- We are still in a response. All finds must be reported to <https://report.mpi.govt.nz/pest> or 0800 80 99 66

- There are no negative consequences to growers for reporting, as this pest will not be controlled by removing crops.



Photo: FAW Pupa. If there is significant damage on plants and cobs but no worm is present, they may have pupated. Gentle scraping of the soil surface around the plant base may reveal the Pupa burrow. They may be at varying depths up to 10cm.

For useful tools and guides on detection and identification consult the FAR website for the latest identification guides <https://www.far.org.nz/assets/files/blog/files//8a209e4b-4ca8-5338-af06-f3b80bab18e2.pdf> and MPI Website www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/50839-Fall-armyworm-fact-sheet or contact Ivan Lawrie ivan.lawrie@far.org.nz and Ash Mills ashley.mills@far.org.nz