



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

24th 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.
- FAW has been confirmed in North Canterbury sweetcorn. Although the larvae population is low and early instar, combined with a large Corn Earworm population, any cob damage means significant total produce losses.
- The total number of finds for the 2022-23 season remains at 133. Updates from MPI weekly have now ceased so any new confirmed finds will be reported periodically.
- A second large flight has been recorded this week in Northland, 87 FAW moths were found in traps in Northland this week.
- 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 any neighbouring paddocks in the absence of maize and sweetcorn as FAW will predate a large variety of crops. Volunteer Maize should not be overlooked either.
- Some areas are still not safe to scout so please put safety first.
- 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 (left) and Corn Earworm *Helicoverpa armigera* (right), a comparison shows similarities but also distinct differences. It should be noted that colours and shading can vary, even within the same crop.

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