

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

12th May 2023

<u>Key Points:</u>

- From 1-4 May 2023 Christchurch Town Hall hosted the International Congress on Biological Invasions, Fall armyworm being a hot topic with delegates from around the world gathering to listen to speakers at the FAR-sponsored Fall armyworm Session. Many thanks to Keynote speaker Helen Spafford, Richard Turner, Craig Phillips, Scott Hardwick, Yuan Liu, Yaru Wang, Graham Walker, and Yanling Xu for presenting all of their research, knowledge, and insights. It was all very informative and constructive and much appreciated.
- As it became apparent that FAW is unlikely to be eradicated in NZ, the FAW response has ended and we entered into the Transition to Long-Term Management phase on Friday 21st April. This will be an industry-led management transition.
- As we have finished the response, the unwanted organism status of FAW has now been revoked, meaning it is not mandatory to report finds. However, significant observations are important, please record them and inform us.
- As temperatures are decreasing, the life cycle has begun to slow, and along with a reduction in surveillance, it is important to stay vigilant and scout harvested and any neighbouring paddocks as FAW will predate a large variety of crops. They have been observed on ryegrass and clover in a harvested maize paddock. Crop residues should not be overlooked either.
- In many areas poor weather around the harvest timing in areas has shown large amounts of lodging, shedding/shattering and volunteer maize, a potential winter host for FAW.
- Any information on new host plants will be welcomed as we begin to understand overwintering capabilities and green bridges.
- There is a total of 139 confirmed reports of FAW across NZ.

- The insecticide Sparta® is on label for aerial and ground applications for controlling 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 such as parasitic wasp *Cotesia sp.* which will help contain the numbers.



Photo: Scott Hardwick (AgResearch) presenting at the ICB12023 FAR-sponsored Fall armyworm session.

Thresholds of economic damage

Plant Health Australia provides useful guidance for this:

CROP	THRESHOLD
Maize vegetative	>3 larvae per plant and/or 50% of plants show signs of fresh feeding
Maize whorl stage	>20% of plants at whorl stage with one or more larvae and/or more than 75% of plants showing signs of feeding damage
Sweet corn Tassel emergence	>15% of plants infested at tassel emergence

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