

FACT SHEET



FALL ARMYWORM LARVA ON CORN

Image courtesy of Phil Sloderbeck, Kansas State University, Bugwood.org.



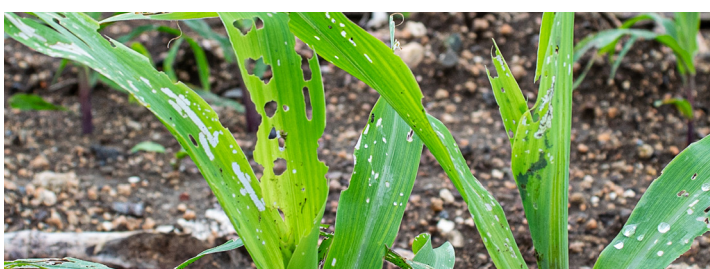
FALL ARMYWORM MOTH (ADULT)

Image courtesy of Robert J. Bauernfeind, Kansas State University, Bugwood.org.



FALL ARMYWORM LARVA WITH DISTINCTIVE BLACK SPOTS ON ABDOMEN

Image courtesy of Russ Ottens, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org.



DAMAGE TO CORN CROP

Images courtesy of Shutterstock.

The fall armyworm (FAW; *Spodoptera frugiperda*) is a destructive exotic moth. It attacks more than 350 plant species in several families. It impacts grasses such as maize, rice, sorghum, sugarcane and wheat, as well as fruit and vegetable crops. Affected vegetable crops include, but are not limited to, sweet corn, beetroot, tomato and potato.

FAW is a new arrival to Australia, having been found in the Torres Strait Islands, Far North Queensland, Katherine, Northern Territory and in Kununurra, Western Australia in 2020.

WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

FAW is a pest native to tropical and sub-tropical regions of the Americas. In 2016, it was found in West Africa. Since then, it has spread to sub-Saharan Africa and several countries across Asia, including China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. In 2020, it was first detected in Australia.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE SEEN FAW?

FAW can look similar to other armyworms already in Australia. However, a good way to differentiate FAW from other armyworms is to look at the larvae. A FAW larva has four dark spots towards the end of its abdomen, arranged in a square.

Eggs cluster together in groups of 100-200 on the underside of a leaf, encased in a silky, furry substance.

WHAT DAMAGE DOES IT CAUSE?

FAW causes damage by consuming foliage and attacking a plant's shoot, stem and fruit. Distinctive damage includes pinholes, windowing, tattering or complete defoliation. Overseas, packs of FAW have stripped entire fields and cost industries millions.

In tomatoes, FAW damage can result in premature leaf drop and fruit rot.

In sweetcorn, larvae can cause such heavy defoliation that feeding damage decimates everything except the stalk.

If you suspect FAW in your crop, report it to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881.

For more information, contact Madeleine Quirk at AUSVEG on 03 9882 0277.