



## Industry update #3 – fall armyworm

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30 April 2020

### **Situation update**

Moths of the pest fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) have been detected in Carnarvon, following earlier detections in Broome and Kununurra, Western Australia.

The pest was first found in Australia in January 2020 on the Torres Strait islands of Saibai and Erub and spread quickly to other parts of north Queensland, including Bamaga, Croydon, South Johnstone, Tolga, Lakeland, Mareeba, Burdekin and Bowen.

In March, the pest was detected in traps in Darwin, Douglas Daly and Katherine, Northern Territory.

Fall armyworm was confirmed in Western Australia on 1 April 2020 from a moth collected in a pheromone trap in Kununurra during March. Larvae were also found in maize and sorghum crops.

Fall armyworm adults and larvae have been confirmed from several locations around Broome in maize, sweet corn, forage sorghum and Rhodes grass crops.

Recently, the pest was found in Carnarvon in surveillance traps operated by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD). Identification was confirmed on 28 April.

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) concluded in February that fall armyworm was not technically feasible to eradicate from Australia.

This was due to the pest's reproductive capacity, ability to fly long distances and wide host range, combined with the remoteness and spread of known infestations in Australia.

Assisting industry to manage fall armyworm and minimise the impact is the priority.

### **WA activity**

DPIRD has deployed approximately 50 pheromone (lure) traps throughout north Western Australia, including Kununurra, Broome, Carnarvon, Geraldton and the Pilbara. These complement existing traps in Kununurra, which have operated since October 2019.

This surveillance trapping network will assist in providing early warning advice to industry in the regions.

DPIRD delivered a webinar conference to approximately 70 growers, agronomists and industry representatives on 9 April 2020 to discuss the surveillance program, identification and management options.

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DPIRD is liaising with the Australian Government, state and territory governments and industry groups which are collaborating to assist in preparing for and minimising the impact of this fall armyworm as it becomes more broadly established, as well as identifying priority RD&E to address knowledge gaps.

Ten key knowledge gaps requiring further research were identified at a technical national workshop: (1) chemical controls, (2) surveillance, (3) host plant specificity within Australian production systems, (4) Integrated Pest Management, (5) bio-controls, (6) plant genetics, (7) extension, (8) modelling spread rate, (9) lure sensitivity and alternative traps and (10) in paddock sampling and diagnostics.

DPIRD is working with commercial grain growers in Western Australia to consider the placement of targeted traps during the growing season.

### **Chemical permits**

Permits are in place for fall armyworm control in horticulture and grains crops. More information is available from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) Online Services Portal <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/permits>. Search for 'fall armyworm'.

The permits should be read in conjunction with the relevant product label for information on withholding periods and other critical comments.

### **Biosecurity and reporting**

Growers are encouraged to regularly monitor their crops for the presence of fall armyworm larvae.

On-farm biosecurity measures should be in place to protect crops from pests and diseases. More information is available at [farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://farmbiosecurity.com.au).

Growers and agronomists are encouraged to report any unexpected symptoms in the field to DPIRD via the Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) on +61 (0)8 9368 3080 or email [padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au) or via the [MyPestGuide Reporter app](#).

### **Further information and enquiries**

More information is available on the DPIRD [website](#) at [agric.wa.gov.au](http://agric.wa.gov.au). Search for 'fall armyworm'.

General enquiries or suspect reports can be made to DPIRD's PaDIS +61 (0)8 9368 3080 or email [padis@dpird.wa.gov.au](mailto:padis@dpird.wa.gov.au)

WA industry enquiries can be directed to:

- Horticulture - Helen Spafford, Senior Research Scientist +61 (0)8 9166 4074
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