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NSW DPI and LLS - Update on Fall army worm detections in NSW

Further detections of Fall armyworm moths and now **larvae** have occurred in the Lower Namoi region of NSW.

Following the initial detection of a single male moth in a pheromone trap located between Moree and Boggabilla collected on the 23/9/2020, additional moths have been collected from traps to the East of Narrabri, and to the West of Wee Waa as recently as the 12th and 15th of October.

The latest detections of the fall armyworm moths prompted one of the trap collaborators to inspect an adjacent corn crop, where they almost immediately found symptoms of damage and located small Fall armyworm larvae.

All grain growers and consultants in the Northern grain growing regions of NSW should be looking for the signs of fall armyworm damage and the presence of larvae in establishing summer crops.

The early symptoms include 'windowing' of leaves where larvae have hatched, and small 'shot holes' in leaves as the expand, from larvae feeding within the leaf whorl before it has expanded.

Identification of recently emerged larvae can be difficult in the field, but by the time the larvae reach second to third instar the features that allow diagnosis become more obvious.

For small larvae, DPI and LLS recommend retaining samples with food, such as host crop leaves, and allow them to grow to enable photographs to be taken. In most cases DPI will be able to provide a diagnosis from clear photographs.

Images of suspect fall armyworm can be sent to the NSW DPI biosecurity for assistance with identification:

- Call the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline 1800 084 881
- Email biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au with a clear photo and your contact details
- Complete an online form

Action to control larvae while they are small is recommended to maximise efficacy, to help restrict local population increase and to minimise further spread. If a decision to treat a crop is taken, we recommend retaining larval samples to rear before treatment, which will also be important if treatments are not considered effective.

Careful consideration needs to be given to product choice, as genetic testing has indicated that fall armyworm sampled from Northern populations carry markers for target site resistance associated with organophosphate and carbamate chemistries.

Growers and consultants are encouraged to access the NSW DPI and LLS websites fall armyworm pages for information on identification, treatment options and resistance management.

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/insect-pests-and-plant-diseases/fall-armyworm