



Eritrea's decisive and instant measures help to reduce Fall Army Worm population

Reports from all Eritrean regions witness that Fall Army Worm (FAW) population is decreasing thanks to the decisive and instant measures that included rogging out and burning of FAW infected maize taken by the Government and the people of Eritrea prior to the up coming main rainy season.

According to the reports from the regions, the number of male FAW moths being caught by the indicative pheromone traps distributed throughout the country are getting lower and lower in the past two months. In the month of March, it was reported that on average 37 male moths per trap in a week were being caught. In April, the number decreased to six and in May it was reduced to only two.

"Although, these facts are promising, it doesn't mean that we will be free from FAW in the coming rainy season. Since this pest is going to be one of the permanent pests in our country, we need to put an integrated pest management systems in place." said Mr. Tedros Sium, head of Migratory Pests Control Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture.

According to Mr. Tedros, in line with the efforts that have been taken to prevent FAW distribution through integrated control mechanism, the Ministry of Agriculture conducted various high-level meetings, gave various trainings, distributed educational publications in different local languages. Moreover, to reach rural communities on time through various information sharing mechanisms, the Ministry has so far disseminated essential information related to the incidence of FAW and management mechanisms through local media outlets. Documentaries, TV

spots, circulars, and other informative programs that are related to FAW have also been broadcasted in all local languages.

It is to be recalled that FAW has been detected in Eritrea in the month of February, 2018 in small plots of irrigated farms in some regions of the country. FAW was detected mainly in maize plant intercropped with vegetables. Then, the Ministry of Agriculture took urgent mechanical and cultural control

measures in collaboration with farmers and other stakeholders to address the issue in its early stage.

Mr. Tedros stressed that since the pest could not be eradicated and is here to stay in the country, some outbreaks are likely to occur in the country in areas that receive early summer rainfall.

He finally urged all regions of the country to strictly follow and adopt the directives being sent to them from the Ministry of Agriculture head quarters.

It is to be noted that Integrated Pest Management is so far the best option to control FAW.



Ministry gives FAW management training

The Ministry of Agriculture gave a five-day training on FAW management in Dekemhare city from 16-20 May, 2018, to 40 plant protection, agronomy and horticulture experts representing all the Ministry's zoba branches and the Eritrean Crop and Livestock Corporation.

The training which was given by senior plant protection experts from the Ministry and Prof. Adugna Haile from Hamelmalo Agricultural College focused on FAW biology, Scouting and trapping, FAW management as well as communication strategy to combat Fall armyworm.

According to Prof. Adugna Haile, the trainees got adequate and updated facts about FAW biology and its management practices. Moreover, the trainees had a chance to visit farms which were infested with FAW in Debarwa subzone and at the National Agricultural Research Institute laboratory in order to acquire a good experience on its identification.

Mr. Heruy Asgedom, Director General of Agricultural Extension Department and Mr. Efrem Kiflu, Head of Administration and Finance division at the Ministry
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handed over certificates to the trainees as well as certificate of appreciation to the trainers.

Finally, Mr. Heruy Asgedom delivered a closing remark. He mentioned the training as one of the ongoing efforts to tackle

FAW and urged the trainees to increase their dedication in the fight against FAW.

He further reminded the trainees to pass on what they got from the training to experts and farmers of their respective regions.

It is to be recalled that 80 plant protection experts from all sub-zones of the country were trained on FAW identification, Surveillance and management in the month of March, 2018 in Keren and Mendefera.

Fall Army Worm: On the march to Britain, the deadly pest that devastated swathes of Africa

Source:- BBC

A crop-destroying caterpillar that has devastated agriculture in Africa is poised to spread into southern Europe for the first time and could even reach Britain, experts are warning.

European customs inspectors have already discovered and destroyed the pest on quarantined crops imported from Africa on several occasions, but the European Union is increasingly concerned that the caterpillar will burst out of Africa through natural migration.

With Asia as vulnerable as Europe, a worldwide infestation of a pest that had previously been contained to the Americas could have significant implications on the global agricultural economy.

Distribution models developed by experts recruited by the European Commission say the pest could reach southern Europe across the Mediterranean or via the Sinai Peninsula and the Levant.

Climatic conditions in southern and northern Spain as well as in the toe of Italy are suitable for the establishment of Fall Army Worm populations, according to Regan Early, a biologist at Exeter University who sits on the European Commission's panel of experts for Fall Army Worm.

The pest could even become a seasonal visitor to Britain during summer months.

"Butterflies like the Painted Lady can fly across the Sahara, so it is possible Fall Army Worm could do the same," she said.

"If it becomes resident in Morocco then, absolutely, it will be making migrations into the south of Spain, up through France as far as the UK, potentially."

She also predicted that the caterpillar could reach the Nile Valley this year or next, posing a major threat to Egypt's cotton industry, but also providing another access route into Europe via Turkey and Greece.

Farmers in the United States, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico have battled the worm for a century, with their respective governments spending hundreds of millions of pounds a year to contain a pest that has proved impossible to eradicate. Last year, Kenya lost 620,000 acres of maize, more than a fifth of a crop on which the vast majority of the population depends for basic sustenance.

Meanwhile according to a news released by Xinhua on May 29th 2018, out of the total 353,000 hectare of maize production currently under harvest in Ethiopia, the fall armyworm has stretched its spread into 87,000 hectares.

Fall Armyworm Tech Prize

80% of applications for 400,000 USD Fall Armyworm Tech Prize are from Africa

A \$400,000 competition which aims to find digital solutions to identify, track and protect crops from Fall armyworm — which has devastated agricultural produce across the continent — has received 228 applications from entrepreneurs and innovators — with 80% of these from Africa.

The announcement, made on 25 May 2018 in a press release by Nesta — a UK-based foundation which runs innovation challenges — on behalf of Feed the Future last Friday. Nesta said 80% of applicants to the its global Fall Armyworm Tech Prize were from African entrants.

The five countries with the highest number of entries were: Uganda (52),

Nigeria (25), US (23), Ghana (22) and Kenya (21).

Nesta, on behalf of Feed the Future, USAID, Land O' Lakes International Development (LOL) and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR) launched the prize in March in search of tools that can work in different regions across the African continent.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID), together with LOL and FFAR have contributed \$400,000 in prize awards, and the winners will have a chance to develop their prototypes and see immediate feedback from smallholder farmers.