Fall Army Worm and other Pests Newsletter

Farmers take measures to minimize crop loss due to fall armyworm infestation in the Northern Red Sea Region

Significant number of Fall armyworm (FAW) detected in Northern red sea region, sub zones of Gindae and Sheeb in the month of November.

Mr. Hassen Jimie, head of Agriculture branch at Sheeb sub zone told this Newsletter that 700 hectares of maize land in Sheeb sub zone is infested with FAW.

Generally around 7000 hectares of land, out of which 85% sorghum, is under cultivation in Sheeb sub zone. Except 400 heactares of land which is being rainfed cultivated, all the rest is under spate irrigation.

According to Mr. Hassen, Fall army worm is becoming a big threat in the sub zone in that it is infesting maize and sorghum, the major crops in the area. However the sorghum crops are tolerating the infestation. But it is to be noted that if not halted on time, the FAW in the maize fields would also be a major source of infestation to other parts of the region and the country.

Mr. Hassen finally urged the cooperation of administrative bodies and the people of sheeb sub zone to take necessary measures to minimize FAW induced yield loss.

Meanwhile, FAW was also reported in the sub zone of Gindae during the month of November. According to Mr. Ghide Kiflay, head of crop production unit in the sub zone of Gindae, 500 hectares of maize land cultivated under spate irrigation in administrative areas of Adishuma, Shebah and Metkel-abyet are totally infested with Fall army worm.

Consequently, farmers of these areas in collaboration with the military around

are taking measures to eliminate the FAW infested maize plants.

Mr. Ghide also told this Newsletter that Fall armyworm was also detected in Sorghum fields planted in 70 hectares of the same administrative areas.

Mr. Hassen Jimie

Small scale desert locust outbreak reported

Desert Locust (DL) situation remained calm during the month of November in our broader region. Some solitary scattered adults of DL were seen in Sudan and Oman. Limited control operations were also carried out in Northern Somalia, according to Mr. Tedros sium, Migratory Pests Control unit head.

The Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Eritrea has been conducting regular survey operations in various hot spots of traditional locust breeding areas in the Norther Red Sea region during the month of November. A couple of survey teams are deployed in Sheeb, Karura and Afabet sub zones for regular monitoring and follow up. As per the report of these teams, all stages of desert locust hoppers were observed along the Red sea coast around Habil-ketin and Awget, Karura site. To control these small scale outbreaks, spraying operation is in progress, according to Mr. Tedros sium.

More over, gregarious hoppers of Migratory Locusts, new kinds of locusts species to our country, were detected in Tiem Gafit plantation, around Gadem Halib area. An intervention to control these new locust species is also taking place.

Since Sheeb and Karora areas are receiving good rain, favorable conditions for small-scale Desert Locust outbreak is expected to occur.

Mr. Ghide Kiflay

Sorghum plants reached fruiting stage tolerating FAW infestation, Adishuma area

However the sorghum plants have tolerated the infestation with no significant harm.

Mr. Ghide finally urged all farmers of Gindae sub zone to reinforce their cooperation and to monitor the 400 hectares of rainfed cultivated maize fields.

During the summer season, the highlands of Eritrea became almost free of Fall armyworm infestation thanks to the harmonized efforts between the people and government bodies. These efforts and experience should be put in place in the areas that receive winter rain fall so to prevent FAW incidences and ultimately minimize yield loss due to this dangerous pest.

Winners of 'Feed the Future Fall Armyworm Tech Prize' announced

The U.S. Agency for International Development, Land O'Lakes International Development, and the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research announced the six winners of the Feed the Future Fall Armyworm Tech Prize at the AfricaCom conference in South Africa on November 14, 2018.

The prize, launched in March 2018, sought digital innovations that could help farmers manage the recent spread of fall armyworm - a voracious agricultural pest - in Africa. Fall armyworm has the potential to cause an estimated $2-6 billion (USD) in maize losses alone over three years.

Following a competitive co-creation and evaluation process and the field-testing of prototypes, USAID and its partners awarded prizes worth $450,000 to six organizations with digital solutions that will provide information to smallholder farmers and those who support them to identify, treat and track the incidence of fall armyworm.

USAID and its partners awarded:

• A grand prize of $150,000 to Farm. ink, a Nairobi-based start-up that has integrated a Fall Armyworm Virtual Advisor into its Africa Farmers Club mobile service. This online group and chatbot already provides more than 150,000 farmers across Africa with farming information. The new virtual advisory feature will provide specific information on how to identify and treat fall armyworm.

• $75,000 each to Akorian, a Ugandan agricultural technology company, for an enhanced fall armyworm diagnostic in its EzyAgric app; and to AfriFARM, an app by Project Concern International and Dimagi, a social enterprise based in Massachusetts.

• $50,000 each to Farmerline and Henson Geodata Technologies, both Ghana-based, and the Nigerian technology platform eHealth Systems Africa, to further develop early-stage mobile applications that will provide tailored information for combatting fall armyworm.

The prize received 228 entries from organizations around the world, 80 percent of which were based in Africa. A diverse panel of global experts working in agriculture, technology entrepreneurship, and impact investment judged the entries and made final selections. The winning entries are working with smallholder farmers in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, and Nigeria, with the potential to scale solutions to other countries.

The prize is part of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative, a global effort led by USAID to address the root causes of hunger and poverty in developing countries.