

Pest report of coconut black headed caterpillar in Thailand

In 2007, outbreak of coconut black headed caterpillar (*Opisina arenosella* Walker) was occurred in Prachuap Khiri Khan province (upper southern part of Thailand) which is major coconut planting area of Thailand. The infestation of coconut black headed caterpillars causes severe damage to the coconut trees resulting in reduction of yield significantly. Massive damage to the crown of leaves affects the thatching quality of leaves and coconut production may be halved due to reduction of flower spike, increase in premature nut fall, constriction of the trunk and retardation of growth. Heavy infestation of this pest can cause the tree to die. This pest is the most important coconut pest in India and Sri Lanka. It is also reported from the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Bangladesh. At present, the outbreak of this pest spread to other coconut growing areas including central, north-eastern and southern parts of the country. Coconut black headed caterpillar has a number of host plants including oil palms, date palms, betel nuts, ornamental palms and banana.

The Department of Agriculture has set up the programs to control the coconut black headed caterpillar in several ways. The programs have been emphasized on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) including using chemical insecticide and bioinsecticides such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* and parasitoids including *Trichogramma* sp. (egg parasitoid), *Bracon hebetor* (larval parasitoid) and *Goniozus nephantidis* (larval parasitoid, imported from Sri Lanka). Furthermore, field sanitations such as removing the damaged coconut leaves also were employed.