



# Fall Armyworm Control in Action Newsletter

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## Highlights

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the FAO Global Action (GA) on Fall Armyworm (FAW) Control on 16 April 2021 was chaired by QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, and attended by 58 SC members and observers. The meeting provided guidance on the renewed Technical Committee (TC) working mechanisms, resource mobilization recommendations, and a proposal for a Fall Armyworm Migration Monitoring and Early Warning System in Asia.

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Technical Committee of the GA was held on 2 April 2021. The meeting was chaired by Robert Bertram, Chief Scientist of USAID, and attended by 44 TC members and observers. The meeting’s main objectives were to discuss renewed working mechanisms for TC members to better support the implementation

of the GA, and a proposal to establish a Fall Armyworm Migration Monitoring and Early Warning System in Asia.

The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Working Group for Resource Mobilization (WGRM) was convened on 11 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General, with 26 participants. The agenda focused on providing guidance and recommendations to the GA’s Steering Committee on practical steps to mobilize resources, especially at the country level. Donor representatives urged the WGRM to consider linking FAW, with its destruction of livelihoods and food security, to relevant global initiatives. The strong collaboration between FAO and research institutions and governments should also be emphasized. At least USD 10 million per year is required for the implementation of the GA.

Eight Geo-Zone coordination meetings for implementation of the GA on FAW control at country and farmer-field levels were held between February and April 2021 across Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, Near East and Northern Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Northeast Asia. All eight demonstration and 53 pilot countries got on board, with no country left behind. FAW pilot countries were asked to establish a national task force, designate a focal point, and to participate actively in all technical training and demonstration activities organized within their Geo-Zones.



## Implementation

Prevention, preparedness, and response guidelines for *Spodoptera frugiperda* (FAW) are under development, with input from target countries. A questionnaire will seek information on pest

regulations, prevention, surveillance, emergency response and control measures in target countries, to be evaluated by the FAO/IPPC FAW technical working group. This information will be used to facilitate implementation of FAW guidelines in webinars planned for the second quarter of 2021.

General guidelines on developing and implementing regional integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for FAW control in demonstration countries were endorsed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> SC meeting and will soon be available online on the FAO FAW website.

Workshops to formulate regional IPM strategies and work plans have been conducted in all Geo-Zones in Africa, and in the Near East and North Africa. Draft regional IPM packages will soon be available.

### National Focal Points and National Task Force Leaders for FAW control in eight demonstration countries.

**China:** NFP Zhu Enlin, NTF lead Wenbo Pan; **India:** NFP O.P. Verma, NTF lead M. Ashwani Kumar; **the Philippines:** NFP Jonar Yago, NTF lead George Culaste; **Egypt:** NFP & NTF lead Mohammed Abdel Meguid; **Burkina Faso:** NFP Bekouanan Clovis Nabie, NTF lead Lamourdia Thiombiano; **Cameroon:** NFP Colince Nguelo, NTF lead Mme Mbong Epe Bambot Grace Annih; **Kenya:** NFP Francis Musavi, NTF lead Collin Micheni Marangu; **Malawi:** NFP Ida Mwato, NTF lead G.P.N Ching’oma.

## Communications and Partnerships

The first in a series of technical training webinars was organized by FAO Southern Africa subregional office, with the Plant Protection Institution of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). Held on 3 March 2021, the webinar was attended by 53 participants from the subregion. Experts from Africa and China shared their experiences in FAW biological control, monitoring and early warning. The meeting also discussed integrated FAW management. Other webinars will be held involving various Geo-Zones.

FAO FAW Secretariat hosted a global technical webinar on 23 March 2021, titled “Mighty Plants: Host plant resistance in the fight against

*fall armyworm*”. The meeting was attended by more than 180 participants. The webinar reviewed efforts surrounding native genetic resistance in crop plants, especially maize. Challenges as well as successes were discussed by presenters, including B.M. Prasanna, Director of the Global Maize Program of CIMMYT and Director of the CGIAR Research Program MAIZE; Carlos A. Blanco of USDA; and Johnnie van den Berg of North-West University in South Africa.

FAO FAW Secretariat will host a global technical webinar on “Nature-based solutions for FAW management” in collaboration with TC members on **19 May 2021**. Register your interest here to receive further updates for the webinar: [https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EzTIpQADTE2bKzeKeWNwbw](https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EzTIpQADTE2bKzeKeWNwbw)

## New Developments

The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) has [launched a mass release](#) of indigenous natural enemies to control FAW in five counties in Kenya. Over 140 000 wasps of both *Telenomus remus* and *Trichogramma chilonis* that parasitize FAW eggs; and 5 000 wasps of *Cotesia icipe* that parasitize early larval stages of FAW, have been released. Results have been very encouraging and further releases are planned. The organization has also [developed new biopesticides](#) while strengthening regional collaboration for harmonization and commercialization of

agricultural products and technologies. A number of newly discovered biopesticides are undergoing fast-tracked registration.

A review of biopesticides against FAW in Africa reported increased availability of field efficacy data, as well as availability of commercialized biopesticides in the region. Documented information gaps include cost-benefit analyses of particular biopesticide options, as well as compatibility of biopesticides with other IPM interventions (Bateman *et al.*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jen.12856>).



Farmer scouts for FAW using mobile phone application FAW Monitoring and Early Warning System.

## Field stories

**Sri Lanka.** FAW-associated yield losses were as low as two percent in 2020, due in part to an IPM approach, increased awareness, and education among all stakeholders. Sound national coordination was essential to a successful response. A national FAW network and monitoring system was established, and area-wide control was pursued.

**Gabon:** A capacity-building workshop in Gabon captured significant news media interest in FAW and boosted national awareness

of the destructive pest. The workshop, held in three major cities consecutively, involved 60 participants learning to recognize FAW and differentiate it from other pests, field management, control and prevention methods. Group work complied with COVID-19 safety measures, in classrooms and in maize and sugar cane fields. Participants included farmers, heads of agricultural sectors and technical support centres from each of Gabon’s nine provinces. The workshop also reviewed information-sharing systems in the provinces.

**Malawi:** IPM of FAW across regions and countries is essential to reduce infestations and crop losses for greater food security and better livelihoods for producers, said FAO Representative in Malawi, Zhijun Chen. He spoke during a webinar 3 March 2021 where Southern African countries and China shared experiences in FAW monitoring and forecasting. The webinar was hosted by FAO Southern Africa subregional office with the Plant Protection Institution of CAAS, with participants from academia, research centres and governments in Botswana, China, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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