

## Biosecurity Advice

### UPDATE

#### Pest

*Spodoptera frugiperda* – Fall armyworm

#### Date

27 April 2020

#### Location

Broome (Kimberley - WA) & Emerald, Biloela, Clermont (Central Queensland)



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#### Key Points

- The exotic moth pest fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) has been detected in the Broome region (Kimberley – WA), Emerald, Biloela and Clermont (Central Western Queensland) and Richmond (North West Queensland) in the past two weeks. This follows a detection on the Torres Strait Islands of Saibai and Erub in January 2020, and Bamaga on the tip of Cape York in mid-February 2020, the Atherton Tablelands, Bowen and Katherine in the NT in March/April 2020.
- Fall armyworm traps have been distributed in Kununurra, Broome, parts of the Pilbara, Carnarvon, and Geraldton (WA) as part of surveillance to help determine the spread of the pest in Northern WA.
- The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) met on 24 February 2020 and concluded that fall armyworm is not technically feasible to eradicate from Australia due to the heavy infestation at Croydon, the remote locations in which it has been found, and the speed and distance that fall armyworm can naturally spread.
- The APVMA have issued a number of permits for the use of certain chemicals to control the pest and are currently assessing additional permit applications for use against Fall armyworm.
- Greenlife Industry Australia has assessed the plant protection products available to the nursery production industry under Minor Use Permits and have drafted and submitted a Fall armyworm emergency permit due at the end of April 2020.
- If you're concerned that your plants may be infected, please contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881 right away – early detection is vital for managing and eradicating pests and disease.
- For more information on the Fall armyworm, please go to the Pest ID Tool via [pestid.com.au/pest-insect/fall-armyworm](https://pestid.com.au/pest-insect/fall-armyworm)

#### Situation overview

- The Departments of Agriculture/Primary Industries across state and territories are working with the Australian Government, industry groups (**Greenlife Industry Australia**), and communities to assess the host preferences and to prepare industries for ongoing management of the pest.
- **Greenlife Industry Australia** is assessing current plant protection products, available to nursery production, having identified approximately 10 active ingredients under Minor Use Permits have been drafted into a fall armyworm emergency permit. **Greenlife Industry Australia** is expecting the delivery of the emergency permit by the APVMA at the end of April 2020.
- Fall armyworm larvae (caterpillar) is known to eat and destroy more than 350 plant species, including maize, cotton, rice, sorghum, sugarcane, wheat and many vegetable, fruit and ornamental crops and have caused significant economic losses overseas. The following are some of the recorded fall armyworm host plant families:

• Asteraceae – e.g. Chrysanthemum	• Geraniaceae – e.g. Pelargonium
• Brassicaceae – e.g. Cabbage	• Myrtaceae – e.g. Eucalyptus
• Cucurbitaceae – e.g. Watermelon	• Poaceae – e.g. Wheat/sugarcane/corn
• Ericaceae – e.g. Blueberry	• Rosaceae – e.g. Roses/peach/apple
• Fabaceae – e.g. Beans/peas	• Solanaceae – e.g. Tomato/capsicum
• Malvaceae – e.g. Cotton/hibiscus	• Rutaceae – e.g. Lemon, mandarin, orange


- Destruction of crops can happen almost overnight without control measures when larval (caterpillars) population levels are high.

### About Fall armyworm

- Fall armyworm is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas. Since 2016 it has rapidly spread to and throughout Africa, the Indian subcontinent, China and Southeast Asia.
- Fall armyworm larvae (caterpillars) are most active during late summer and early autumn months.
- Adults (moths) can fly long distances and their migration rate is remarkably fast. As well as natural dispersal, they can also be spread through movement of people.
- Australia's conditions are favourable for this pest to establish and spread, including our climate and suitable hosts.
- It is most likely found in warm, moist regions with little forest cover or hitchhiking on fresh vegetables or fruit.
- Evidence of the pest could include egg masses, plant leaf damage or fruit or vegetable damage. See [www.pestid.com.au](http://www.pestid.com.au)
- There are species of *Spodoptera* already present in Australia which can look similar to fall armyworm. Some are pests, such as lawn armyworm and day-feeding armyworm.
- In early 2016, fall armyworm was detected in Central and Western Africa and has quickly spread across most of Sub-Saharan Africa. By December 2018, it had been reported in the Indian subcontinent. In June 2019 it was reported in China and Southeast Asia.

For further information contact the GIA National Biosecurity Manager John McDonald email: [john.mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au](mailto:john.mcdonald@greenlifeindustry.com.au) or call 07 3277 7900.

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