

Current Situation of FAW and the Role of AU

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Introduction

- ▶ The emergence and spread of Fall Armyworm (FAW) in many African countries poses a big threat to food and nutrition security hence affecting the national economies. The pest also poses a serious threat to the achievement of goals that African countries have committed to in the CAADP Malabo Declaration of halving poverty by 2025 and the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals. The problem therefore warrants a coordinated response for effective action to address the outbreak of FAW.
- ▶ Due to the absence of early warning systems in many African countries, pest outbreaks are common and farmers rely heavily on the use of agrochemicals particularly pesticides, which result in increased production cost and a negative impact on public health and the environment. In addition, intensive pesticide use increases the risk of pesticide residue in the produce, thus conceding competitiveness of Africa's agricultural products in regional and global trade. Further, enhanced trade and mobility of people increases the probability of pest introduction in new areas more so with the relatively weak national plant protection and quarantine services in many African countries.

Nature of problem, its threat and its spread in African

- ▶ Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is an insect pest that feeds on more than 100 crop species, causing damage to economically important cultivated cereals such as maize, rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane, vegetable crops and cotton. It is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas, with the adult moth able to move over 100 km per night. It lays its eggs on plants, from which larvae hatch and begin feeding. High infestations can lead to significant yield loss. Farmers in the Americas have been managing the pest for many years, but at significant cost. First detected in Central and Western Africa in early 2016 (Sao Tome and Principe, Nigeria, Benin and Togo) and in late 2016 and 2017 in Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and it is expected to move further. By May 2017, FAW had affected 25 countries. To date, 44 countries are affected. Though countries are still to carry out detailed assessments of impact on the harvest, loss caused by FAW could be very heavy.

Distribution and Spread of FAW in Africa

- ▶ Rapid spread has continued and now 44 countries are affected. There are no official reports from North Africa, but there are some announcements from Egypt that they will send specimens to CABI for identification, and if it is confirmed it will become a risk to Europe through migration. Now it has already reached the Indian Ocean islands, including Madagascar.

Fall armyworm: impacts and implications for Africa

Yield loss

- ▶ In new household surveys in Ghana and Zambia (2018), 80% of farmers reported maize to be affected, but only 2-4% reported damage to Napier grass, sorghum or millet. The average maize loss reported by farmers was 26.6% in Ghana. This is much lower than reported in 2017. Yield loss could be lower due to climatic factors, build-up of natural enemies or improved management. Farmers may also be getting better at estimating FAW damage.
- ▶ Extrapolating these losses nationally gives an estimate of US\$177m in lost value of the annual maize crop in Ghana and US\$159m in Zambia. Most parts of Ghana and Zambia are highly suitable for FAW, so countries with maize growing in areas less suitable for the pest might be expected to suffer less damage. However, the relationship between environmental suitability and level of loss has yet to be established.

Trade impacts

- ▶ It was already a regulated pest in Europe before its arrival in Africa, and was regularly intercepted on commodities from Central America. In response to the increased risk to Europe from the establishment of FAW in Africa, the EU instigated emergency measures with effect from 1 June 2018 for a period of two years. The measures cover *Capsicum*, *Momordica*, *Solanum* and maize, and require strict controls to be in place in countries to reduce the risk of the pest reaching Europe. In 2017, two consignments from Africa containing FAW were intercepted in Europe, and 17 interceptions have been made in the first eight months of 2018, nine of which were on the specified crops. These levels of interceptions suggest African exporters are managing the situation satisfactorily by including FAW in already established phytosanitary procedures.

Actions Taken by AU

- ▶ AU, together with partners such as FAO, CAB-INTERNATIONAL and EU have held consultative meetings to ensure a coordinated response for effective action due to the rapid outbreak of FAW. To this end, the Commission has been asked to take the leadership of this initiative in order to raise awareness at the highest policy making level. The coordination role of the Commission will be spearheaded by the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC) which is an intergovernmental Organization and a Specialized Technical Office of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the Commission responsible for Africa cooperation in plant health matters. IAPSC's objectives are to promote plant protection, to develop international strategies against the introduction and spread of quarantine pests and to promote safe and effective control methods. As a Regional Plant Protection Organization, IAPSC also participates in global discussions on plant health organized by FAO and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) Secretariat. Finally, it coordinates all African NPPOs to comply with ISPMs to enhance crop production and productivity and facilitate agricultural trade.

AU's response

- ▶ Press Conference by the AUC-DCP and the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture in 2017
- ▶ Briefing of the AU Security Council in 2017
- ▶ The STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment; the Executive Council adopted the STC report in January 2018
- ▶ There is a proposal to establish an emergency fund for FAW and PRC has requested a study to that effect. The Commission is working closely with FAO to engage consultants to undertake the study
- ▶ In a South to South collaboration, USAID supported the participation of decision-makers including the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture and African ministers in a FAW tour of Brazil to enhance sharing of information and best practices on FAW

AU's response Cont.

- ▶ To strengthen phytosanitary systems further, the African Union sought support from FAO (TCP) owing to her comparative advantages especially; its broad global knowledge and experience across elements of food and agriculture. FAO's specific roles in addressing the FAW challenge include advocacy and awareness raising, strengthening governance frameworks, the establishment of national and regional surveillance and monitoring systems for early warning, developing tools and capacity building efforts.

What AU-FAO TCP addresses

- ▶ Inadequate availability of early warning systems in many African countries.
- ▶ Rampant pest outbreaks that make farmers rely heavily on the use of agrochemicals leading to increased production cost and negative impact on public health and the environment.
- ▶ Limited competitiveness of Africa's agricultural produce in the regional and global trade due to increased use of pesticides and related risk of pesticide residue.
- ▶ High probability of pest introduction in new areas with the relatively weak national plant protection and quarantine services due to increased trade and mobility of people.

Where is the TCP now

- ▶ The inception workshop for AU-FAO project support in reinforcement of plant health governance in Africa through coordinated management of the fall armyworm-*Spodoptera frugiperda* (phgov-faw) was held on 5th - 6th April 2018 at AU Headquarter in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia. This workshop elaborated a work plan to be followed for the implementation of the FAO-AU TCP.
- ▶ In March 2019 AU-IAPSC held with FAO a Farm School for Anglophone countries to help them in the identification, control, management, and sharing of information with the best alert system.

Where is the TCP now

The workshop on Fast-tracking and Harmonization of pesticides registration for Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda* J.E. Smith) control in Africa was held on 25 to 27 October 2018; in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia by AU-IAPSC with the prime objectives being:

- ▶ Regulators quality management, pesticide registration and other methods of FAW control.
- ▶ To form a basis for which the national authorities would make choices of methods to use at local levels (pesticides, bio-rational among others).

In terms of results, the following were achieved:

- ▶ Review of the registered pesticides for FAW and determination of the risk levels
- ▶ Assess the legally available pesticides
- ▶ Information exchange on the various methods of FAW control and pesticides used
- ▶ Identify priorities for testing to reduce the time as each country has their own registration procedures
- ▶ Make wise choices in the pesticides in terms of cost, associated risks and other impacts.

Where is the TCP now

- ▶ In March 2019 AU-IAPSC held with FAO a Farm School for Anglophone countries to help them in the identification, control, management, and sharing of information with the best alert system
- ▶ FAO with AU-IAPSC arranged to hold a Farm School for Francophone countries which will be held in Dakar 22 April, 2019
- ▶ Also we start to arrange for a new website for emergency pest problems and a pest alert system to be hosted in IAPSC
- ▶ IAPSC shared all information about FAW for all MS through our portal and IAPSC Bulletin.

Others organization's responses

- ▶ ASTF project assisted most of the southern Africa countries to detect the presence of FAW, conducted rapid assessments, and reported the incidence, all within 2 – 3 months; With the objective to avoid fragmentation and develop a more coordinated comprehensive response; FAO then organized the first FAW consultative meeting in Harare (February 14 – 16, 2017).
- ▶ The Harare workshop was followed by a more inclusive one in Nairobi on April 25 - 26, 2017 and then the Africa – wide meeting April 27 – 28, 2017), jointly organized by AGRA, CIMMYT, and FAO.

Others organization's responses

- ▶ The Africa – wide meeting, April 27 – 28 2017, jointly organized by AGRA, CIMMYT, and FAO, and attended by 160 participants from the Americas, Europe and Africa. An Action Plan was developed and FAO was requested to coordinate this multi-stakeholders initiative. Based on a Nairobi Action plan, FAO has developed a framework for a coordinated response to FAW. This framework is guiding the development of projects and programmes by the various stakeholders in the areas of their expertise, capacities and mandate. The theory of change which underpins this framework is that for farmers to reduce their vulnerability and improve their livelihoods, in a situation where FAW is a widespread threat, they need to develop the capacity to manage their farms sustainably, to observe early signs of pest attack and to take management action to protect their crop in a cost effective and environmentally-sound manner.

FAW regional programme framework

The framework consists of four main components

- ▶ Surveillance and early warning: collecting data at field level, stored in a database, providing tools to undertake spatial and other analysis, and should be geared towards helping farmers take early action to respond to a possible upsurge in FAW;
- ▶ Impact assessment: to establish a baseline and perform subsequent in-season monitoring and assessment of the impact of FAW in terms of damage and loss;
- ▶ Sustainable Management: beginning with immediate understanding and actions, based on best-known practices, while further developing sound management options in the longer term;
- ▶ Coordination: at national, sub-regional, and continental-wide.

The coordination is needed at three main levels:

- ▶ National coordination through task forces or committees at the operational level;
- ▶ Regional/sub-regional level, sharing information on experiences of control, and early warning, between countries;
- ▶ Africa-wide, sharing information on a broader basis, mobilizing resources and monitoring the overall results of projects and programmes.

Conclusion

- ▶ Threats to food security, livelihoods, and national economies, posed by invasive pests such as fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) and others are on the increase.
- ▶ 44 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are now affected by fall armyworm (FAW), North Africa are environmentally suitable but not yet affected.
- ▶ The Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of African Union (AU-IAPSC) is working hard to ensure coordination actions of different stakeholders and partners institutions involved in fall armyworm management and control in Africa. Pesticides are the most commonly used control in some countries and some used biological control also.
- ▶ Research and development on FAW monitoring and control is expanding the set of integrated pest management (IPM) tools available.
- ▶ Mortality due to local natural enemies of FAW is reaching high levels in some cases.
- ▶ Many organisations are providing advice to farmers using a variety of traditional and novel communication methods with varying objectives.
- ▶ Recommended control methods should be efficacious, safe, sustainable, practical, available and cost-effective.
- ▶ The Future strengthens the capacity of African communities, institutions and governments to manage FAW through a range of sustainable and effective Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies that protect people and the environment.

I Thank You

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect against the white background.