

COMBATting FALL ARMYWORM

Feed the Future: Responding to Fall Armyworm in Africa

Fall Armyworm (FAW) is an invasive and damaging pest endemic to the Americas that is spreading across Africa, particularly targeting maize, a vital staple crop. Feed 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. By mobilizing our collective experience, knowledge, and resources to control FAW and limit its spread, we can reduce the risk of a future humanitarian crisis and strengthen the systems needed to respond.

Background

It is anticipated that FAW will have long-term effects on crop yields, food supplies, livelihoods, trade, and threaten the resilience of chronically vulnerable populations. The potential impact of FAW highlights a fundamental challenge smallholder farmers face—limited access to information, tools, technologies and management practices—and the need for systems that effectively respond to emerging transboundary threats. Earlier this year, African governments and partners began monitoring the outbreak and developing a coordinated response. Despite these efforts, additional actions are needed to address the magnitude of the challenge. Effectively managing FAW requires broad mobilization of all partners—the private sector, universities, research institutions, donors, and civil society—to contribute to research, development, and dissemination of appropriate technologies at a scale that will detect, mitigate and manage this pest.

U.S. Government Response

We call on the global private sector, universities and research centers, foundations, civil society organizations, and other development partners to join Africans to combat this pest and build resilience. The Americas successfully control FAW using an array of IPM strategies, including conventional host plant resistance, biotechnology, pesticides, and biological control. Feed the Future is supporting the transfer of knowledge, creating awareness among farm communities, and disseminating the latest research and evidence-based technologies and management practices through:

- Incentivizing innovators to create digital solutions to identify, track and provide information on how to treat fall armyworm for smallholder farmers.
- Developing a standardized FAW Pest Management Field Guide of evidence-based management options for low resource African farmers in collaboration with United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and research partners, and disseminating this and extension tools among governments, technical pest management and extension experts, research institutions, development partners and farm communities.
- Strengthening commercial seed systems to reach seed companies and agro-dealers with the most current information on the means to combat FAW and—where emergency distribution of FAW resistant seeds is appropriate—working through existing networks to support market-based distribution systems.
- Providing technical assistance to ensure appropriate policies, regulations and systems are in place to test, approve, register and certify synthetic/biological pesticides, and biological control tools.
- Strengthening the capacity of African governments and research institutions in IPM, from monitoring and early warning to understanding host plant resistance to identifying and scaling-up low-cost, effective, and environmentally sustainable technologies and approaches.

Contact fallarmyworm@usaid.gov to get more involved or access additional information.