Physical and visual diagnosis: Identification of Fall Armyworm

Spot the Pest, Stop the Damage

This technology is accessible, pictorial training materials that overcome literacy barriers and help communities correctly distinguish fall armyworm from look-alike pests; a foundational capacity-building tool that enables local farmers—including women and youth—to act as ongoing "pest scouts" by recognizing egg masses and window-pane feeding damage; and a sustainable asset that strengthens community resilience and improves the effectiveness of later management or emergency responses.


CABI

Fall Armyworm Field Handbook

Identification and Management

This technology is pre-validated.

9·9 Scaling readiness: idea maturity 9/9; level of use 9/9

Inclusion assessment

Climate impact 7

Problem

- **Communities lack core capacity:** The sudden arrival of FAW created a critical information gap, leaving communities vulnerable as they could not identify the pest early enough to mount a defense.
- **Information excludes marginalized groups:** Identification guides were initially unavailable in pictorial formats or local languages, excluding farmers with limited literacy (like women).
- **Projects are reactive:** Infestations were often noticed too late, meaning interventions and aid became reactive responses to severe crop losses, undermining resilience-building efforts.

Solution

- Empowering all farmers (including women and those with low literacy) through simple, pictorial guides that are accessible to everyone.
- Building local scouting capacity, training community members to flag FAW eggs or early damage immediately, and fostering self-reliance.
- Ensuring project interventions (like biocontrol releases or handpicking) are proactive and timely, maximizing the effectiveness of aid before damage becomes severe.

Key points to design your program

Development Partner Program Integration

Development partners should integrate FAW identification capacity to **empower communities, build resilience, and ensure the sustainability of broader management interventions**.

Projects must utilize the **FAW Field Handbook** content as the foundation for all training, leveraging its pictorial format to transcend literacy barriers and ensure that identification training is highly accessible to all community members. Development programs should prioritize participatory training methods, such as Farmer Field Schools, to train local "pest scouts" and community champions who can confidently recognize the pest's life stages and damage symptoms (like the characteristic inverted "Y" mark). Crucially, the initiative must be designed for inclusion, actively engaging women and youth in scouting roles, as they are essential for community adoption and can leverage digital tools for data recording. Finally, the capacity building should be institutionalized through close coordination with government extension services, sharing training content and linking community-generated identification data to national or regional early warning systems, ensuring the knowledge and monitoring practices persist after project funding ends.

IP

Open source / open access

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Commodities

Sustainable Development Goals

2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
15 LIFE ON LAND

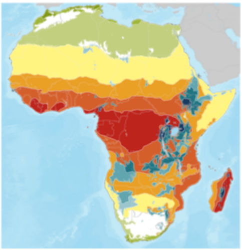
Categories

Production, Practices, Pest Identification

Tested/adopted in

Where it can be used

This technology can be used in the colored agro-ecological zones.



Target groups

Farmers, Advisory and Extension Services