

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATION AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 4592
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23rd March, 2021

INFESTATION OF FALL ARMYWORM

4592. SHRI GNANATHIRAVIAM S.:

Will the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that crops have been getting damaged across the country due to the infestation of fall armyworm which causes extensive damage to crops;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the lepidoptern pest migrated to India in June, 2018 and it feeds on leaves and stems of more than 80 plant species, causing major damage to crop such as maize, rice, sorghum, sugarcane, vegetable crops and cotton, etc; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken/being taken by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) to (c) : The fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) is a polyphagous migratory pest species in the order of Lepidoptera. The pest was reported for the first time in India in May 2018. Globally, the pest is reported for over 80 crop species. It causes infestation in maize frequently and in cotton, rice, sorghum and vegetables occasionally. In India, major infestation has been reported in maize. This pest has affected the whole country maize area in one or other season since Kharif 2018 and has spread throughout India except Kashmir in three years (2018-2020). A total area affected by fall armyworm (FAW) in the country during 2018-19, 2019-20 and 20-21 is 5,06,107 ha, 7,18,326 ha and 7,07,686 ha respectively. Though, due to timely interventions, issuance of advisories, circulations of package of practices, wide publicity, demonstrations, workshops, review meetings, close monitoring, extensive awareness campaigns/ orientation/ training programs for extension officers and farmers by the States and

Centre, no significant damage have been reported by States. Indian Council of Agricultural Research has reported that, the strain that causes damage to rice, sugarcane, etc. is not reported in India.

(d): As the Fall Armyworm is an invasive pest to India, Indian Council of Agricultural Research developed package of practices as a 'quick action strategy' to combat its menace upon its report in 2018. A pest alert was released across the country including Agriculture departments of various States, State Agriculture Universities and Central Integrated Pest Management Centres. Posters related to preliminary identification at farm level, folders, informative bulletins were produced and supplied to stakeholders in different regional languages along with the control measures to be taken up.

Package of Practices (POP) for fall armyworm (FAW) management in different maize types viz. grain maize, fodder maize, sweet corn and baby corn were prepared and circulated to States by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & farmers Welfare. ICAR institutes are monitoring the behavior and survival of FAW in various host plants under field and laboratory conditions. ICAR Institutes (Indian Institute of Maize Research, National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute Zone X, ICAR Complex for North Eastern Hill Region) with its coordinating network have organized 616 major training programmes across the country benefitting 17,490 personals.

ICAR-IIMR in collaboration with FAO organized six virtual training programs on "Integrated pest management for maize crops with special reference to fall armyworm" under the FAO project on "Time-critical measures to support early warning and monitoring and sustainable management of the Fall Armyworm in India" benefiting 597 stakeholders. Presently, maize growing farmers and extension officials are fully aware of the FAW incidence and applying specific interventions throughout India. The Indian Institute of Millets Research and All India Coordinated Research Project on Maize started a dedicated research program for the management of FAW through host plant resistance, cultural, biological, chemical and mechanical means for its sustainable management. In November 2019, ICAR funded a mega project on "Development of sustainable management tools for the invasive pest, Fall Armyworm in maize.
