**Evaluation of integrated pest management technologies against fall armyworm in maize**

**Abstract:** The evaluation of integrated pest management technologies against fall armyworm in maize was conducted by District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centre (DAATTC), Vizianagaram in five farmer’s field during 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. The results revealed that the pest incidence was lower in IPM module compared to the historically adopted farmer’s practices, featuring here as a control*.* . The increase in yield of 6.78% was observed in IPM demonstration (8503 kg/ha) compared to the control (7963 kg/ha). The net returns of Rs. 10,3214.00/ha and Rs. 91,145.00/ha were obtained in the IPM and control, respectively. The extension gap, technology gap and technology index were 747 kg/ha, 540 kg/ha and 8.07%, respectively. The lower technology index indicates that the technology implementation is feasible providing better education and popularization of the new programs thus reducing the gap between extension programs and new technologies.

**Keywords:** Fall armyworm, maize, technology gap, extension gap, technology index

**Introduction:** Maize (*Zea mays* L.) is one of the most versatile crops having wider adaptability under varied agro-climatic conditions and cultivated throughout the year. It is the third most important staple food crop after rice and wheat. The productivity of maize is challenged by various biotic and abiotic factors. It acts as host for approximately 141 insect pests (**Reddy and Trivedi, 2008**). Recently, the invasive pest Fall armyworm (FAW) [*Spodoptera frugiperda* (J. E. Smith)] has become a great threat to cereal production in the world (**Day *et al.,* 2017**).

The pest is native to tropical and subtropical regions of the United States of America and it was spread to 47 African countries and 13 Asian countries because of its high migratory capacity *i.e.,* up to 100 km per night (**Nagoshi *et al.,* 2017 and Prasanna *et al.,* 2018**). In India, it was first noticed on maize in Karnataka during May, 2018 (**Sharanabasappa *et al.,* 2018**) later, it was spread to Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana (**Swamy *et al.,* 2018**).It is a polyphagous pest and has a wide host range of 186 plant species including many economically important crops such as maize, sorghum, sugarcane, rice, wheat, cowpea, groundnut, potato, soybean, cotton, *etc.* belonging to 42 different families (**Casmuz *et al.,* 2010**).

In the case of maize, FAW damages the crop from seedling to physiological maturity stage. The young larvae consume leaf tissue from one side initially by leaving the opposite epidermal layer intact giving a peculiar ‘windowpane display’ (**Sonali Deole and Nandita Paul, 2018**). It causes skeletonization of leaves and heavily windowed whorls loaded with larval frass. It could also bore into the maize stem and cobs (**Dhar *et al.,* 2019**). Reported yield losses are up to 34% **(Williams and Davis, 1990)**, 57.6 to 58% **(Cruz *et al.,* 1999** and **Chimweta *et al.,* 2019)** and. in some tropical areas yield losses can reach up to 100 % **(Blanco *et al.,* 2016**).

As the FAW has recently been introduced into Indi,a the management of this pest is difficult due to the lack of awareness for the management practices and its natural enemies. The pest has caused severe losses to the maize in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh. Hence, the present study was conducted to determine the efficacy of IPM technologies for the FAW management.

**Material and methods:**

The present study was conducted by the District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centre, Vizianagaram in five farmer’s field during *rabi,* 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.The treatments within IPM practices were seed treatment with cyantraniliprole 19.8 + thiamethoxam 19.8 FS @ 6 ml/kg, spraying with azadirachtin 1500 ppm (Neem 1500) @ 5ml/L at 20 DAS, spraying with *Metarhizium anisopliae* @ 5g/L at 30-35 DAS, and spraying emamectin benzoate 5SG (Proclaim) @ 0.4g/L at 45-50 DAS whereas treatment in control fields consisted of following insecticide applications: chlorpyriphos 20 EC@2.5ml/L, profenophos 50EC @ 2ml/L etc. The treatment efficacy data were collected from 20 plants in both, the IPM demonstration fields and control blocks by registering the number of FAW indicating the level of infestation from seedling to crop maturity at 15-days interval. The yield data was collected in both the IPM and control fields. The extension gap, technology gap and technology index were worked out by using the following formula **(Samui *et al.,* 2000 and Swathi *et al.,* 2020)**.

Technology gap (kg ha-1) = Potential yield (kg ha-1) – Demonstration yield (kg ha-1)

Extension gap (Kg ha-1) = Demonstration yield (Kg ha-1) – Control (Farmer’s) yield (Kg ha-1)

Technology index (%) = (Potential yield (Kg ha-1)–Demonstration yield (Kg ha1)) X 100 / Potential yield (Kg ha-1)

**Results and discussion:**  Our findings indicate that it is essential to have an improved set of recommendations for effective FAW management in maize. The incidence of pest was low in the IPM plots compared to the control. (Table1). The plant infestation caused by fall armyworm was 9.92% in the IPM plot, and 20.95% in the control block. The low incidence of pest in the IPM plot could be attributed to regular monitoring and prophylactic applications of azadiractin at the rate of 1500ppm which acted as a strong oviposition deterrent & repellent against FAW adults and antifeedant for larvae of FAW. The prophylactic spraying of entomopathogenic fungicide like *Metarhizium anisopliae* @ 5g/L and chemical insecticide like emamectin benzoate 5SG @ 0.4g/L were effective in the management of larvae. Similar findings were observed by **Geetha (2021), Reddy *et al*., 2023 and Narayanamma *et al*., 2023.**

**Yield and gap analysis:**

The IPM technology had an impact on the incidence of FAW and yield of maize (Table 2). The yield obtained in the IPM managed field (8,503 kg/ha) was 6.78% higher than in the control field (7,963 kg/ha). The net returns of Rs. 103,214.00/ha were obtained from the IPM managed fields, versus Rs. 91,145.00/ha from the control. The highest benefit cost ratio of 3.08:1 was recorded in the IPM managed fields compared to the 2.75:1 obtained from the control. The increased yield and net returns in the IPM module demonstration plot is due to the timely implementation of protection measures against FAW.The results are in concurrence with the findings of **Rajashekhar *et al*. (2022)** and **Kavyashree *et al*. (2023)**

The extension gap, technology gap and technology index observed in the present study were 747 kg/ha, 540 kg/ha and 8.07 respectively, (Table 3). The extension gap and technology gap were higher. This study indicates that more efforts are needed to convince farmers to adopt IPM practices as more efficient production management approach resulting in reduction in pest damage, cost of production, and improved produce quality.The technology index of 8.07% showed the feasibility of technology adaptation and implementation at farmer’s fields. The findings are in line with **Ramadevi *et al*. (2020)** and **Reddy *et al*. (2023)**.

**Conclusion:**

The fall armyworm is one of the devastating pests in maize. It infests the crop from seedling to cob maturity and causes significant yield loss. The results obtained in the present trial on evaluation of IPM management approaches against fall armyworm in maize revealed that this technology provides superior results in the FAW population managemnt and as such, it is feasible for adaptation and implementation in farmer’s fields. The FAW pest incidence was low in the IPM managed fields resulting in the 6.78% higher yield compared to the yield obtained in the control field managed in a traditional manner. However, the extension gap and technology gap were higher. There is an urgent need to create awareness among farmers about the effectiveness of the IPM program and benefits of the program implementation for better FAW management in maize. That could be achieved through the services of extension personnel to improve the maize yield and quality, and to reduce the extension and technology gap in the Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh.

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**Table 1: Incidence of fall armyworm on maize during *rabi*, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Year** | **Plant infestation (%)** |
| **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** |
| 1 | 2019-20 | 11.5 | 23.75 |
| 2 | 2020-21 | 8.75 | 18.50 |
| 3 | 2021-22 | 9.50 | 20.60 |
| Mean | 9.92 | 20.95 |

**Table 2: Effect of IPM of fall armyworm on yield and economics of maize during *rabi*, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Year** | **Yield (kg/ha)** | **Gross returns (Rs./ha)** | **Cost of cultivation (Rs./ha)** | **Net returns (Rs./ha)** | **Benefit cost ratio** |
| **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** | **Increase in yield (%)** | **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** | **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** | **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** | **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** |
| 1 | 2019-20 | 8513 | 7965 | 6.88 | 149836 | 140191 | 47752 | 48995 | 102084 | 91196 | 3.14:1 | 2.86:1 |
| 2 | 2020-21 | 8481 | 7882 | 7.60 | 149262 | 138716 | 49753 | 52150 | 99509 | 86566 | 3.00:1 | 2.66:1 |
| 3 | 2021-22 | 8516 | 8043 | 5.88 | 159255 | 150398 | 51206 | 54724 | 108049 | 95674 | 3.11:1 | 2.75:1 |
| Mean | 8503 | 7963 | 6.78 | 152784 | 143102 | 49570 | 51956 | 103214 | 91145 | 3.08:1 | 2.75:1 |

**Table:3 Technology gap, extension gap and technology index of IPM of fall armyworm in maize during *rabi*, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S. No.** | **Year** | **Yield (kg/ha)** | **Technology gap (kg/ha)** | **Extension gap****(kg/ha)** | **Technology index (%)** |
| **Potential** | **IPM** | **Farmers’ practice** |
| 1 | 2019-20 | 9250 | 8513 | 7965 | 737 | 548 | 7.97 |
| 2 | 2020-21 | 9250 | 8481 | 7882 | 769 | 599 | 8.31 |
| 3 | 2021-22 | 9250 | 8516 | 8043 | 734 | 473 | 7.94 |
| Mean | 9250 | 8503 | 7963 | 747 | 540 | 8.07 |