



MAURITIUS SUGAR INDUSTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Recommendation Sheet

June 2010, No 173

Sugar cane armyworms *Mythimna* spp.

Sugar cane armyworms *Mythimna* spp., commonly known as 'chenilles légionnaires' are present in mechanically harvested sugar cane fields. The insect is a leaf feeder with the result that total defoliation of young regrowths may occur leaving only the bare midribs. More frequently it occurs in fields harvested green where there is a trash blanket. However, it can also be found in fields burnt prior to harvest. Damage by armyworms usually occurs four to five weeks after harvest but significant reduction in cane growth occur only in fields which are damaged after October.



Adult



Eggs



Larva

► Control measures

- Several species of parasitoids and pathogenic fungi thrive on the larvae of *Mythimna* spp. in Mauritius. Predatory birds such as the Mynah bird and the Village Weaver bird also prey upon the larvae causing significant mortality.
- In association with sugar cane armyworms, two species of caterpillars *Simplicia pannalis* and *Athetis ignava* feed only on dry cane leaves.
- To preserve the non-target organisms, widespread use of insecticides to control sugar cane armyworms is **not** recommended.
- Insecticide should not be applied to fields damaged before October, as these fields will recover from the damage.
- After October fields should be sampled for the presence of larvae. The threshold for insecticide application is five medium-sized larvae per m².
- Application of insecticides when most of the plants have been totally defoliated is a waste of resources since at that time most of the larvae have either migrated to undamaged parts of the fields or have pupated.

► Recommendation for insecticide application

Any one of the following insecticides may be used:

Insecticide	Rate (g a.i L ⁻¹)
Indoxacarb (Steward [®])	0.14
Lambda Cyhalothrin (Karate Zeon [®])	0.05
Chlorantraniliprole (Coragen [®])	0.06
Methoxyfenozide (Runner [®])	0.25

Note: The insecticide is applied to cane rows only, at a rate of 125 L ha⁻¹ (50 L arp⁻¹) and using sprayers fitted with hollow cone nozzles.

Your attention is drawn that guideline and/or advice is restricted for the purpose for which it is recommended only. MSIRI board shall not be responsible for any act that may arise out outside the purview of these guidelines.

This Recommendation Sheet cancels No.147 of February 2005.

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