

## LOWER SOUTH COAST

## EXTENSION MATTERS

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# Armyworm – What to look out for!!!

There are current reports of an outbreak of Armyworm in the North Coast, Umfolozi, Mkuze and Pongola. It is therefore important to remind growers in our region what to look out for.

There are two major types of armyworm in South Africa, namely Fall armyworm (FAW) (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) and African armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*). Both species attack the younger foliage of the cane plant. Other species on which armyworm feed in South Africa include maize, sorghum, potato, soybean and groundnut.

### Fall armyworm (FAW)



**Figure 1: Fall Armyworm:** Note the 'inverted Y' mark on the head and the 'square' black spots on the second last segment. Photo: [www.sana.co.za](http://www.sana.co.za)

Fall armyworm feed day and night for approximately 10-14 days, but generally remain hidden in foliage. Moths fly at night only. Fall armyworm rarely display massing and marching.

### African armyworm



**Figure 2: African Armyworm:** Green and black in colour with longitudinal white stripes. Photo: [www.sana.co.za](http://www.sana.co.za)

African armyworm feeds day and night and do not hide in the foliage in the day like FAW. Fall armyworms will aggregate in long lines and literally march from area to area. Increased bird activity in affected fields is the first sign of infestation.

## Management in cane

Spraying for control of both species of armyworm can be effectively planned as they feed day and night. Below is a list of chemicals registered for the control of armyworm in sugarcane in South Africa. These, chemicals are also commonly used on cane for eldana management.

Product name	Mode of Action
Coragen	Stomach and contact
Steward	Stomach and contact
Emma	Stomach translaminar
Ampligo	Stomach and contact
Malathion	Stomach and contact

Where growers do encounter a severe infestation of armyworm in the coming weeks, the application of these insecticides in keeping with start of the eldana moth peak (March 2025) will also manage any armyworm infestation.

## Management in other crops

The following chemistries have been registered for control of armyworm in other crops.

Product name	Mode of Action
Advance	Stomach and contact
Addition	Stomach and contact
Belt	Contact only
Doxstar Flo	Stomach and contact
Proclaim	Stomach translaminar
Spitfire 900SP	Contact only
Plemax	Stomach and contact
Avigard	Stomach and contact