

## **Control Of Stalk Borers In Maize Crops**

### **Introduction**

Maize stalkborers are serious insect pests in Kenya. Every year they destroy a great deal of the maize crop. Plants that are 3 to 5 weeks old are at risk of attack by the stalkborer caterpillar.

### **HOW DOES THE CATERPILLAR GET TO THE CROP?**

Moths fly at night and lay eggs on maize plants between the leaf sheath and the stem on the youngest fully unfolded leaf. Eggs hatch into caterpillars, which move into the growing points, where they start to feed.

### **WHAT DAMAGE DOES THE PEST CAUSE?**



• Holes in the leaves



• Holes in stalk



Death of growing point



Damage to developing seeds  
in the cob



### WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

There are many things you can do. Choose from the list below:

#### Cultural control

- Cut maize stalks after harvest to ground level and leave to dry.
- Clear all remains of the previous maize crop after harvest if the field was heavily attacked by stalkborers.
- Plough deeply, then harrow.
- Plant early, at the beginning of the rains or in the next 2 two weeks.



A pinch per plant in the funnel

- Start looking for signs of damage when plants are 2 to 4 weeks old, depending on the area. If you find damage holes in the leaves then use any of the following chemicals:

#### Chemical control

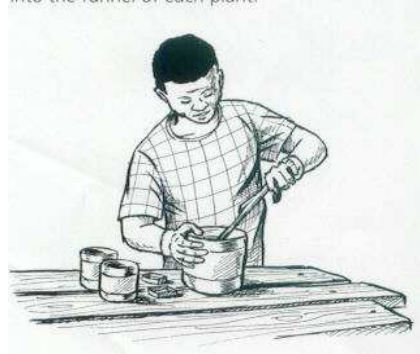
- Thiodan 3% G - a pinch into the funnel of each plant (1.2 - 1.6 kg/acre).
- Dipterex 2.5% G - a pinch into the funnel of each plant (1.2 - 1.6 kg/acre).
- Bulldock 0.05% G - one shake in the funnel of each plant (3-4 kg/ acre).

- Ambush 0.05%G - one shake per plant in the funnel (3 - 4 kg/acre).
- Pymac (the residue from pyrethrum processing) - a spoonful of Pymac should be applied into the funnel of each plant.



One shake per plant in the funnel

One shake per plant in the funnel



Making a mixture of ash and dried ground pepper

- **NATURAL PRODUCT**
- You can make your own control mixture by adding 2 kg ash (2 kg Kimbo tin or one gorogoro) to 50 gm (2 match boxes) of dried ground pepper. Apply a pinch of the mixture into the funnel of each plant.
- **WHEN DO YOU APPLY CONTROL MEASURES?**
- *Apply the above products when damage symptoms are noticed*
- 4 weeks after planting in high-altitude areas of Western Kenya, Rift Valley and Central Provinces.
- 2 to 3 weeks after the crop has germinated in the low-altitude areas.

#### **PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

Always ensure you wear gloves or plastic bags on your hands when you are applying these chemicals.

If you use these simple methods you will not lose your maize to stalkborers.

#### **For more information, contact:**

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