

Know the damage

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Ministry for Primary Industries
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Fall armyworm larvae can cause different types of feeding **damage** as they grow.



First instar
Window-pane



Second - third instar
Window-pane and small
holes



Third - fourth instar
Shot holes, tattered
leaves & whorl damage



Advanced
Whorl/growing point

Is it fall armyworm?

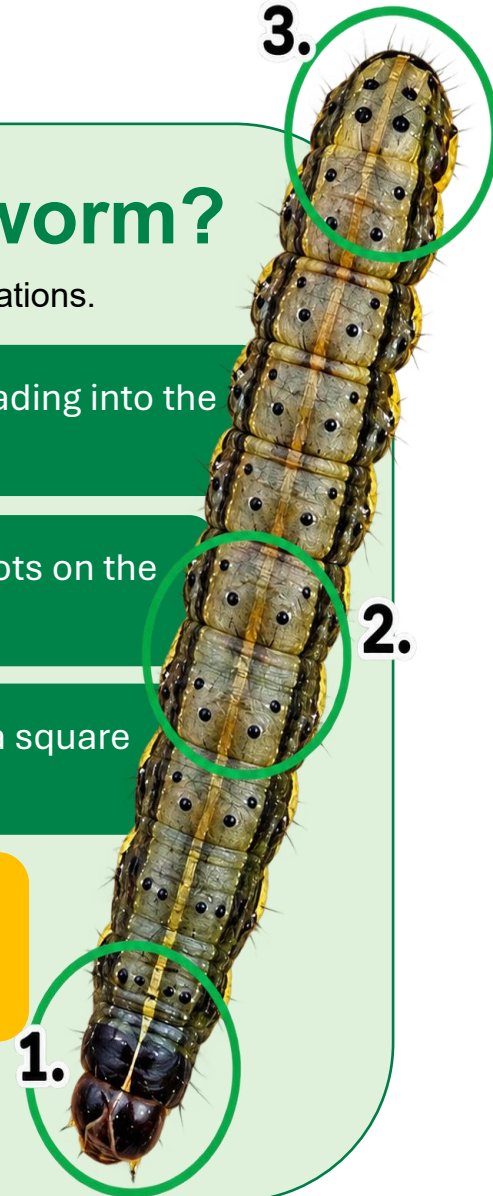
Look for these three key identifications.

1. A distinct 'Y' on the head leading into the dorsal line.

2. Four trapezoid patterned dots on the body segments.

3. Four pronounced dots in a square pattern at the rear.

Other pests may share a similar identification **but not all three key markings** together.



Maize and Sweetcorn Growth Stages, Economic Thresholds and FAW Risk

Scout early. Manage smart. Protect your crop.

Germination		Seedling		Early Whorl		Late Whorl		Tasselling		Maturing		Harvested			
Seed germinated		Emergence to 2 leaves with collars visible		3rd to 6th leaf stages, roots and stalk establishing		Rapid leaf and stalk growth, whorl pronounced		Tassel visible, silking begins		Grain development: blister, milk, dough, dent stages		Physiological maturity reached (black layer)			
															
Simplified stage		Germination		Seedling		Early whorl		Late whorl		Tasselling		Maturing		Harvested	
Traditional stages		VE		V1–V2		V3–V6		V7–Vn (e.g. V10, V12, V14)		VT, R1		R2–R5		R6	
Economic thresholds (% of plants)	Maize	–	≥5% cut	≥20% infested	≥40% damaged and larvae present	≥20% infested	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Sweetcorn	–	≥5% cut	≥20% infested	≥40% damaged and larvae present	≥5% infested	≥5% infested	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
Relative FAW risk	Maize (silage/grain)	Highest risk (seedling and early whorl)				Moderate risk (late whorl)				Lower risk (tasselling onwards)				Low risk at maturity	
	Sweetcorn (fresh market)	Highest risk (seedling and early whorl)				Moderate risk (late whorl)				High risk (tasselling to harvest – cobs vulnerable)					

Larval size and chemical control

Small larvae: most effective control window



Larger larvae: increasingly difficult to control



FAW larval development: approximately 14–30 days (variable depending on temperature).
Check product labels for approved rates and application guidance.

Key messages

- The greatest risk from FAW is during the seedling and early whorl stages for both maize and sweetcorn.
- Risk reduces as maize plants mature and damaged cobs generally do not affect the end product of silage.
- Sweetcorn cobs remain vulnerable from tasselling through to harvest.
- Plant as early as realistically possible to reduce the likelihood of vulnerable young crops coinciding with later FAW generations.
- Regular scouting across the whole paddock is essential to inform management decisions.

Remember

- ✓ Use the economic thresholds to guide control decisions.
- ✓ Scout regularly and monitor plant growth stage.
- ✓ Consider integrated pest management (IPM) – cultural controls, natural enemies and, where necessary, approved insecticides.
- ✓ For the latest regional updates, identification guides and management advice, visit www.fallarmyworm.nz