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To

The Editor,

Date: 26.02.2024

Sir,

I request that the following message may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

TNAU organized Integrated Pest Management against Maize Fall armyworm

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore and Plant Health Initiative, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, Mexico, along with the State Department of Agriculture Sulur and Sultanpet blocks of Coimbatore District organised Interactive Field day at Mr.Ramasamy field, Velappanaickenpalayam village, Sultanpet block. The demonstrations were laid out in one acre plots with different treatments viz., botanicals, biological control, Integrated Pest Management chemical control and Farmers' practice under field conditions. The impacts of treatments were evaluated under Participatory Evaluation by farmers and extension personnel in these two fields.

During this program, Dr.T.Srinivasan, Associate Professor (Agrl. Entomology), invited the gathering and informed the farmers about the infestation caused by invasive maize fall armyworm. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, Mexico, has agreed for funding to demonstrate the Integrated Pest and Disease Management strategies for the management of maize fall armyworm and other diseases occurring in maize through a participatory evaluation program involving farmers and the State Department of Agriculture extension personnel. He also informed that, maize fall armyworm was spotted in 2018 in Tamil Nadu. Intensive research by the Department of Entomology, CPPS, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, resulted in the development and validation of IPM strategies that have been widely advocated to the farmers. Further, the cause for increased incidence of fall armyworm across all the maize-growing districts of Tamil Nadu is being investigated. Mr. Ramesh, Asst. Agricultural Officer, informed the farmers about the joint efforts put forth by TNAU and Stae Department of Agriculture in tackling the fall armyworm menace. He also explained schemes and subsidies extended by the State Department of Agriculture.

Dr.S.Maruthachalam, Assoc. Professor (Plant Pathology) in his technical address, discussed the disease management strategies for containing maize collar rot, blight and leaf spot diseases. He also interacted with the farmers pertaining to the various diseases of the crops grown in Sultanpet block. Later, Dr.T.Srinivasan, Associate Professor (Entomology), provided the IPM strategies to be followed for managing maize fall armyworm.

This includes application of neem cake @ 250 kg/ha at the time of last ploughing, seed treatment with cyantraniliprole 19.8% + thiamethoxam19.8% FS @ 4 ml/kg seed, border cropping with cowpea, gingelly/red gram or sunflower in garden land conditions and fodder sorghum in dryland conditions @ three rows of selected crop, monitoring of FAW adults using pheromone traps @ 12/ha and window based application of insecticides viz., Chlorantraniliprole 18.5 SC @ 0.4 ml/lit (or) flubendiamide 480 SC @ 0.5 ml/lit at early stage (15 - 20 DAE) followed by azadirachtin 1500 ppm @ 5 ml/lit on need basis at 15-20 days after emergence, Metarhizium anisopliae (TNAU-MA-GDU isolate) @ 2.5 kg/ha (or) emamectin benzoate 5 SG @ 0.4 g/lit or novaluron 10 EC @ 1.5 ml/lit or spinetoram 11.7 SC @ 0.5 ml/lit at 35-40 DAE and any of the late whorl stage insecticides during cob formation stage. In this IPDM Participatory evaluation programme, about 20 extension personnel and 50 progressive farmers participated to inspect the IPM fields and benefitted by the programme.

Public Relations Officer