SYMPOSIUM

PREFACE

NOTE
Reprints of the entire Fall Armyworm Symposium are available from any of the authors. Readers are advised that they need to contact just one of the authors in this group to receive a copy of the entire proceedings, p. 81-133.

The fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda* (J. E. Smith), overwinters in Florida and in a few southern coastal areas. Each year the pest migrates from these refugia to infest crops as far north as Canada and as far west as Montana. Average annual crop losses by the fall armyworm in the United States exceed $300 million; during particularly severe outbreaks as occurred in 1975, 1976 and 1977, losses attributed to this pest exceeded $500 million annually.

In the Southeastern United States interest is growing in the development of a cropping system which will permit the production of 2 crops of corn each year on the same piece of land. In this region such a program conceivably could increase producers’ income an estimated $600 million annually. The additional grain would permit expansion of the cattle feeding industry in the Southeast. Thus, the combined economic benefit from the double cropping of corn theoretically could exceed $1 billion annually. The primary obstacle to the successful development of this program is the fall armyworm which shows a keen preference for corn; it is especially devastating to corn planted late in the spring and summer months. Control of the fall armyworm is further complicated by the development of resistance to most of the commonly used insecticides.

The fall armyworm’s habit of surviving the winter months only in subtropical areas of Florida and Texas offers an unique opportunity to develop a population management and forecasting scheme which, if successful, could have a tremendous effect on the numbers of adults which move into the more temperate zones of the United States each growing season. The reduced pressure from migrant moths could greatly reduce and, in some cases, possibly eliminate the need for control measures in these areas.

The reports presented here were in a Symposium on the fall armyworm at the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Branch of the Entomological Society of America in Gainesville, Florida, 25 January 1978. The purpose of the Symposium was to review selected topics on the biology, ecology, and control of the fall armyworm to facilitate future planning of research and control strategies.

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