

SADC needs armyworm control funds

By [Elita Chikwati](#)

13 Dec 2017

SADC agriculture experts have called for urgent financial support to governments to ensure effective management of the Fall armyworm in Southern Africa. This came out at the recent stakeholder meeting held in South Africa.



Tigana chileshe via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Fall armyworm is a new pest in Southern Africa, which causes extensive damage to crops if not controlled in time. The pest has 10 to 12 cycles and can continue recurring after the first spray. The meeting, which called for increased investment and stronger coordination and partnerships in responding to the pest, was organised by the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Representatives of SADC member states, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), donors, development partners, farmers' organisations, academia and research organisations observed that since the Fall armyworm had established itself on the continent and in the region, there was no other option than to manage it effectively and sustainably.

SADC member states and stakeholders were challenged to make strong commitments by allocating more funding, developing programmes and putting in place infrastructure for the management of the fall armyworm and other emerging and re-emerging crop pests and diseases with potential to cause food insecurity in the region.

Urgent financial support needed to ensure effective management of Fall armyworm

FAO sub-regional coordinator for Southern Africa David Phiri said given its adaptability and tenacious nature, many experts believed the pest would continue spreading and impacting on food security.

"We have, however, an opportunity to prevent this threat from reaching disastrous proportions, by building the resilience of farmers and institutions to this pest," he said. The meeting identified funding gaps with respect to farmer education and awareness, monitoring and surveillance, impact assessment, research, as well as rolling out of pest management options.

"There is, therefore, an urgent need to support governments in the region with financial resources to ensure effective management of the Fall armyworm in Southern Africa," he said. All Southern African mainland countries, except Lesotho, are infested with the fall armyworm.

The pest has also been confirmed in the island states of Madagascar and Seychelles, leaving only Mauritius untouched. According to FAO, 1.5 million hectares in Zimbabwe were affected by the pest, 27,000 hectares of crops in Botswana, 138,000 hectares in Malawi, 23,000 hectares in Namibia and over 280,000 hectares in Zambia.



Fall armyworms on march across Africa

Sora Halake 19 Jul 2017



Pesticide management still a challenge

Last year, stakeholders undertook a number of responses, including distribution of pesticides, research, surveillance and monitoring and training of extension officers and farmers, and raising awareness of relevant stakeholders. The meeting observed that pesticide management was still a challenge in the region, especially among smallholder farmers.

It also agreed that the use of synthetic pesticides should only be used as a last resort, and only if they are safe to humans and the environment and are effective in controlling the Fall armyworm.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>