



## ARMYWORM

The larval stage of the moth *Leucania stenographa*, also known as Sugarcane armyworm, causes damage to actively growing sugarcane plant. These worms (larvae) are the active feeding stage of the moth. Their effects are seen mainly on the leaf blades of sugar cane. Some are day feeders whilst others are night feeders. Moths have pale forewings with a dark line running the length of the forewing. The armyworms' activities are more prominent when nights are warm and/or debris from recent floods is in the sugarcane field.



### Life cycle of Army Worms

- Lays eggs in the base of cane leaves in the leaf sheath area and in cane trash and weeds in the field.
- Eggs hatch after 3 to 4 weeks into the larval stage (stage that does the damage).
- The army worm stage lasts for about 3 weeks, and then they burrow into the soil to transform into pupal stage.

- The pupal stage then lasts for about 10 days and emerges into an adult moth.
- The complete cycle takes about 2 months

### Natural Control

Under natural conditions, the army worm is parasitized by wasps and usually keeps them under control. Usually after heavy rains and flooding, the population of the moth tends to increase. This leads to damage to cane.

### Damage to Cane

Severe infestation in cane usually defoliates standing young cane leaving only the midribs standing. Damage is usually more severe in grassy and trash conserved fields and in areas prone to flooding. Dirty drains and headlands also encourage infestation by Armyworms. The damage can be substantiated but expensive methods of control are not warranted.



....keep your field and drains free of debris....



## Control of Army Worm

Prevention is the best way of controlling army worm infestation in cane fields:

- Keep fields well cultivated
- Keep headlands and drains free from weeds
- Avoid as much as practicable to conserve trash on flat land with history of flooding and armyworm infestation.
- Cultivate as soon as possible after heavy rains so that cane fields are as clean as possible.
- Chemical control with insecticide should target larvae 10 to 20 mm long. Larvae larger than 20 mm long can be difficult to kill and may require higher rates of insecticide. If possible spray late in the day as larvae are active at night. Known active constituents of armyworm insecticide include:
  - Alphacypermethrin
  - Chlorpyrifos
  - Diazinon
  - Endosulfan
  - Methomyl
  - Permethrin
  - Trichlofon.

Ensure cultivation and cleaning the headlands and drains. This will have an effect on the soil borne stage of the worm, exposing them to sun and air and natural predators.