NEW RECORDS OF NATURAL ENEMIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BROWN PLANTHOPPER, NILPARVATA LUGENS (STAL)

CLEMENT PETER
Fredrick Institute of Plant Protection and Toxicology, Padappai 601 301, India.

Natural enemies of the brown planthopper Nilparvata lugens (Stal) pest of rice (Oryza sativa) have been reported from Karnataka1, Andhra Pradesh2 and other regions in India3-4. However not much work on the natural enemies of the brown planthopper has been done in Tamil Nadu.

In September 1987, an outbreak of the brown planthopper was reported from Tirupanandal Taluk, Tanjore District in Tamil Nadu. Severe damage was caused to the fully mature crop and subsequently the infestation spread to nurseries and the freshly transplanted crop. A thorough search for predators based on the actual feeding activity on the brown planthopper was carried out to confirm its predatory role.

The following predators were observed feeding on brown planthopper nymphs and adults:

Spiders
(a) Tetragnathidae, Tetragnatha andamanensis Tikader (b) Lycosidae, (i) Lycosa poonaensis Tikader, (ii) Pardosa birmanica Simon, (iii) Pardosa sumatrana (Thorell), (iv) Pardosa shyamae (Tikader).

Insects

Except for Cytorhinus lividipennis and Coccinella arcuata all other species constitute new records of predators of the brown planthopper in India.

The population density of four species viz. Tetragnatha andamanensis, Cytorhinus lividipennis, Stenonabis tagalica and Polydids arnemissimus which were present in large numbers was studied. Within an area of 50 cents, 70 plants of the rice var TKM 9 were selected at random and the number of predators in each hill was counted at 10-day intervals beginning with 40 days after transplanting (DAT).

The first observation revealed that only the spider and nabid were present at the rate of 0.22 and 0.32/ hill respectively. At 50 DAT, there was a sudden spurt in the activity of C. lividipennis to the extent of 18.65 nymphs/hill. However the population of the spider and nabids reduced to 0.17 and 0.07/hill respectively. At 60 DAT, the reduvid, P. arnemissimus had increased to 1.67/hill displacing the nabid completely. Also, the population of C. lividipennis reduced slightly to 13.15/hill while the spider population increased to 0.54/hill. It was also observed that the activity of C. lividipennis was more pronounced in the early hours of the morning compared to afternoon hours. The observation for the incidence of BPH nymphs on the same plants revealed a mean population of 63.87, 125.86 and 84.83 nymphs/hill at 40, 50 and 60 DAT respectively. It appears therefore that even if a large and diverse fauna of predators were present, it may not be sufficient to contain the pest once an outbreak situation was attained.

The biocontrol potential of C. lividipennis was highlighted by Pophaly et al5 and the role of spiders by Barion and Libsinger6. However there is no
record of the host range of *P. arnaisissimus* and *Sirenomalus tagalia*. Adults and nymphs of *Nabis* spp. are predaceous on a variety of preys including aphids, leafhoppers, lygus bugs, spider mites and small caterpillars.

The authors are grateful to Dr B. K. Biswas, Zoological Survey of India, for identifying the spiders and to Dr M. S. K. Ghauri and Dr R. Madge, Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, London and to Dr David Livingstone, Bharathiar University for identification of the Heteroptera and Carabidae.

9 November 1987; Revised 5 March 1988

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Amylase (mg/h/100 ml)</th>
<th>Acid phosphatase (mg/h/100 ml)</th>
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<td>(6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proestrus</td>
<td>25.00 ± 5.00*</td>
<td>3.50 ± 1.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estrus</td>
<td>21.66 ± 9.08</td>
<td>5.50 ± 1.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metestrus</td>
<td>48.33 ± 25.09</td>
<td>1.80 ± 0.68</td>
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<td>Diestrus</td>
<td>24.33 ± 7.26</td>
<td>3.20 ± 0.59</td>
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*Mean ± S.E. with number of samples in parentheses.

AMYLASE AND ACID PHOSPHATASE ACTIVITIES IN LUMINAL FLUID OF RAT

V. N. SINGH and J. N. SINGH*

Department of Zoology, Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur 812 007, India.

* Department of Zoology, T. N. B. College, Bhagalpur 812 007, India.

The luminal fluid is a secretion of the uterus that promotes sperm capacitation, blastocyst metabolism and implantation. Its physical and biochemical nature undergoes cyclic changes during the reproductive cycle. Luminal amylase helps in sperm capacitation, while acid phosphatase activity is very high in semen. Hence it was decided to study amylase and acid phosphatase in luminal fluid of rat during the estrous cycle to identify the cyclic changes and their role in sperm survival.

Female albino rats of Sprague-Dawley strain (150 to 175 g body weight) showing normal estrous cycle were selected and maintained under uniform animal husbandry conditions. Four groups of six rats each belonging to four stages of the estrous cycle were sacrificed by cervical dislocation. Each of the two uterine horns of each rat was flushed with 1 ml of normal saline and the flushings of both horns were pooled together to form one sample. Samples thus collected were processed for biochemical analysis of amylase and acid phosphatase.

As amylase influences sperm capacitation, the lowest value at estrus is due to the increased utilization of amylase at this stage, and also due to the dilution effect of luminal fluid which retains water to its maximum at estrus. This is further supported by the fact that amylase levels in human cervical fluid are inversely related to estrogen. Hence the maximum amylase activity in luminal fluid of rat during metestrus is due to the decline in the endogenous estrogen.

The maximum acid phosphatase activity at estrus suggests that this might be due to the maximum level of endogenous estrogen. Ultrastructural studies indicated that hyperestrogenism induced an increase in acid phosphate activity in primary lysomes of endometrium. Significant decline in the activity at metestrus is due to the decline in endogenous estrogen.

It is interesting to note that the acid phosphatase activity is very high in semen. It is possible that high acid phosphatase activity in luminal fluid at estrus (like that in semen) may make this fluid milieu conducive for sperm survival. Therefore, it is concluded that amylase and acid phosphatase activities at estrus and metestrus are negatively correlated.

11 January 1988; Revised 10 May 1988
