CORRESPONDENCE

Mango – A new record for *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hubner)

Mango (*Mangifera indica* Linn.), belonging to the family Anacardiaceae, is an important tropical fruit crop. Being delicious and succulent, it is known as the king of fruits.

Despite the large area coverage of mango under a number of varieties, the productivity of mango in India is rather low. This might be attributed to ravages inflicted by a variety of insect pests.

Over 400 species of insects have been reported to infest mango\(^1\). Among these, leaf hoppers, stem borers, stone weevil and fruit flies are known to cause economic loss. Recently, *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hubner) was recorded in most severe form, in mango orchards of Dharwad taluk and adjoining Kittur area, Belgaum District, Karnataka, India.

*H. armigera* is a polyphagous pest, which is known to attack more than 200 host plants all over the world. The pest was noticed in old orchards (12- to 15-year-old plants). Activity of the pest was restricted only to reproductive parts, i.e., inflorescence and small fruits with larvae feeding on inflorescence leading to poor fruit set. Also, small fruits were partially fed by the larvae. The infestation level was to the tune of 30–40% and on an average each inflorescence had 0.75 to 1 larva. Since no annual host crops were found near the orchard, it is felt that infestation was due to migration population of *H. armigera*. Breeding studies on mango are in progress.

Most fertilizer recommendations for crops are based on old soil surveys without soil test values, as soil-testing laboratories have no technical staff and chemicals.

Poor farmers are not getting the advantage of crop insurance. Several problems, which disturb the farmers include minimum support price, bad road/transport facilities, non-availability of electricity at crucial time, bank loans at high interest rates and meagre help from the Government/officials.

The country is passing through a very tough time by aging politicians with poor vision, greying laboratories, bureaucracy at every step, technological gap, poor research planning pushing rusted research projects, no attention being paid to real problems, no alternative insurance to farmers committing suicide. The problems are before us but planners are shirking the solutions. Under these circumstances, do you believe in a second green revolution?

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