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NATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CENTRE
DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
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Advisory note on Fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) management in Maize

This is to share some important information regarding the management of fall armyworm (FAW) in maize, as the maize season has already started in some areas, while others are just picking up. During one of the recent visits to the four chiwogs in Samphelling gewog, Chukha Dzongkhag, the Entomology Program, NPPC has observed that FAW damage has already started. Given the susceptibility of maize to FAW infestation from seedling to reproductive stage, it is crucial to implement timely and effective management practices to mitigate potential damage.

Management measures

1. Early Detection Using Sex Pheromone Traps

- Install pheromone traps to detect adult male moth activity.
- Moth captures indicate the onset of egg-laying, which should be confirmed by field scouting.

2. Regular Monitoring

- Advise farmers to regularly inspect maize fields, especially during the early growth stages, for signs of FAW feeding, such as scrapping, windowpane damage, pinholes, and frass.

3. Mechanical Control

- Check for larvae on leaves and whorls.
- Pick and destroy larvae by hand, especially in smaller plots. Though time-consuming, it can be effective when infestations are low.

4. Chemical Control:

- Use recommended insecticides (Chlorantraniliprole 18.5 % SC: 3 ml in 10 liters of water or Emamectin benzoate 5% SG: 2 g/10 liters of water) only as a last resort to save crops and when the pest population crosses the Economic Threshold Level.
- Applying chemicals at the right time ensures effective control while minimizing harm to beneficial insects and the environment.
- During the vegetative stage, from early whorl (3-5 leaves) to late whorl (8-12 leaves), target the spray on the whorls and upper leaves.
- During the reproductive stage, focus on spraying the silks, and ears.
- To avoid resistance buildup and effective control, advise farmers to alternate between these two insecticides (cited above) rather than relying on just one continuously.

