

# CropLife SA warns of possible Lepidoptera pest outbreak

Current weather patterns in Southern Africa may be conducive to the outbreak of certain insect pests such as Lepidoptera. Moist air from the tropics may bring another infestation of the fall armyworm into the Limpopo, North West, Free State and Northern Cape provinces. In addition, the current conditions in these provinces and KwaZulu-Natal are conducive to the outbreak of African armyworm in veld and grazing paddocks.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

## Small possibility of migratory locusts

CropLife SA has been notified of massive clouds of small moths visible early evening in the northern parts of Namibia around Otjiwarongo. Sunflower growers in the North West province of South Africa have also reported a large-scale caterpillar infestation. Although the Karoo remains extremely dry in most parts, it is possible for the migratory locust to appear. However, it is unlikely at this stage.

Crop and livestock farmers should be extremely vigilant in the mentioned provinces and scout late afternoons in cash crops, fruit orchards, grazing paddocks and natural veld for swarms of small moths as the first signs of Lepidoptera pest outbreaks. Farmers who grow non-GM maize and cotton, as well as vegetable farmers, are very vulnerable to fall armyworm and need to make a special effort to scout for the pest. Scouting can be done visually in the early evening. However, it is advisable to also use pheromone traps that are registered and available in South Africa.

## Effective control of large-scale outbreaks

Should farmers suspect the presence of fall armyworm or any other large-scale invasions of Lepidoptera pests, they are urged to take good quality, close-up photographs of the moths, caterpillars and egg parcels and send it via WhatsApp to +27 (0)82 446 8946 (Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, CropLife SA) for assistance with identification.

Farmers are also encouraged to contact CropLife SA for advice on the effective control of any such large-scale outbreaks. In addition, the resources section of CropLife SA's [website](#) contains guidelines for managing specific pests, including fall armyworm.

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