

9. Pest Control

Pest control is an important component of good crop management. Therefore, crops need intensive management, including close and frequent observations (walking in the field) to detect any discrepancies such as pests and diseases infestations and correct them before they can cause any permanent damage to crops. For maize the most common pest is the maize stalk borer and recently Fall Army Worm. For legumes such as cowpea, aphids are common problems. Stalk borer control is often quite easily achieved with granular pesticides applied on the funnel of the growing maize plants at 4 to 6 week leaf stages and insecticides are commonly available. However, the use of sand and laundry powders has been reported to work in some countries such as Malawi. Fall Army Worm is a more recent pest causing serious damage to maize and consequent yield losses of up to 30%. The recommended cultural methods for FAW control are - use of intercrops and rotations with legumes has been reported to be effective in reducing Fall Army Worm Infestations, and early planting.



Figure 9.1 FAW damage to maize