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INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON *TUTA ABSOLUTA*

The South American tomato leafminer, *Tuta absoluta* (Meyrick) (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae), is an endemic neotropical pest that causes significant economic losses to tomatoes *Lycopersicon esculentum* L. and other solanaceous crops. The tiny moth, the size of an eyelash, is a native of Latin America. It was accidentally introduced into Spain in 2006, and has since spread through most of Europe and the Mediterranean regions, and has now made its way into Africa, infesting north of the Sahara, Senegal, Gambia and Niger in West Africa, and Sudan and Ethiopia in East Africa. It is known to attack tomatoes, eggplants, potatoes, peppers, tobacco and solanaceous weeds. Injury is caused by the larvae that mine leaves (see below picture) and fruits and eventually facilitates plant pathogen invasion.



Tomato is the most important horticultural crop in the world. Ever since the invasive leafminer *Tuta absoluta* was confirmed in Ethiopia and Sudan, African experts have been bracing for substantial crop losses. Now that the leafminer has reached sub-Saharan Africa, there are no natural barriers to its spread across the

continent. Because tomatoes play a key role in diversifying the economic and agricultural sectors of many countries, this threat to their production cannot be ignored.



Muni Muniappan meets with members of the South Asia group on the final day of the workshop, as they come up with a list of recommendations. Left to right, back, are: Sulav Paudel, IPM program coordinator for International Development Enterprises in Nepal, and K.R.M. Bhanu, from Bio-Control Research Labs in Bangalore, India. In the foreground are C. Durairaj, professor of entomology at TNAU (back to camera), and Dinesha Shetty, managing director of the Ponalab Biogrowth Private, Ltd. company in Bangalore

After it invaded Senegal in 2012, the IPM Innovation Lab – in collaboration with the USAID West Africa regional office, USDA/APHIS and CORAF – conducted a workshop in May 2013 to sensitize countries in West and Central Africa about the possible invasion of this pest in the near future. Similarly, when the IPM Innovation Lab heard about the *T. absoluta* in Ethiopia, a three-day workshop, *Tuta absoluta* — meeting the challenge of the tomato leafminer, was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from Nov. 26-28. The

purpose of the *T. absoluta* workshop was to alert Eastern African and South Asian countries of this impending problem, and to develop strategies, including biocontrol methods, to deal with it.

The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) and by the International Association for the Plant Protection Scientists (IAPPS). It was attended by international and regional agencies (*icipe*, FAO, CORAF, ASARECA, and the Swiss government) and scientists from Asia (Bangladesh and India), East Africa, Europe, Egypt, Sudan and West Africa. The workshop included hands-on training as well as lectures.

Participants reviewed the available information on *T. absoluta*: taxonomy, origin and distribution, biology, natural enemies, quarantine regulations, monitoring and control methods. Country reports highlighting the current status of *T. absoluta* were presented by 17 countries (Algeria, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Yemen).

The workshop ended with participants drawing up a set of recommendations to be distributed to policymakers and government officials.

Recommendations

1. Form a *T. absoluta* network led by *icipe* (Dr. Samira Muhamed Faris) with the participation of the IPM Innovation Lab (Dr. R. Muniappan) and Russell IPM (Dr. Shakir Al-Zaidi).

2. Countries in West Africa, East Africa and South Asia that have not yet been invaded by this pest should:

- Monitor ports of entry and borders adjoining infested countries with pheromone traps.
- Inform the public about the impending danger of *T. absoluta* invasion via mass media.
- Establish quarantine regulations to prevent the introduction of *T. absoluta*.
- Send suspected specimens collected in the pheromone traps to either Dr. Shakir Al-Zaidi, Dr. R. Muniappan or Dr. Samira Muhamed Faris for identification.

3. Countries in West, East and North Africa wherein *T. absoluta* has established should:

- Monitor, delineate and identify *T. absoluta*-infested areas.
- Set up pheromone traps to monitor temporal and special population dynamics of *T. absoluta*.
- Survey for locally recruited natural enemies of *T. absoluta*.
- Consider classical, inundative and conservation biological control programs.
- Develop an IPM program for *T. absoluta*.

4. Develop regional and/or international IPM project(s) for *T. absoluta* in Africa and Asia.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOPESTICIDES 7



The International Conference on Biopesticides 7 (ICOB7) 2014 will be held in Side, Antalya from 19 to 25 October, 2014. This much anticipated conference will cover a broad spectrum of topics related to the development, role and application of all types of biopesticides in agriculture and human health.

ICOB7 will bring together a diverse and dynamic group of researchers, academics, industry representatives and students from all continents to share their experiences in a wonderful, beachside Mediterranean setting.

We are pleased to inform you that the ICOB7 website is now on-line. Please go to the address below for further information:

<http://www.icob7.org/>

We look forward to seeing you Side, Antalya in 2014.

ICOB7 Secretariat

E-mail: Secretariat_ICOB7@yahoo.com

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IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described in the IAPPS Web Site www.plantprotection.org.

The *IAPPS Newsletter* welcomes news, letters, and other items of interest from individuals and organizations. Address correspondence and information to:

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