



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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A detailed close-up photograph of a Fall Armyworm caterpillar, showing its dark, segmented body with lighter, wavy patterns and its multiple pairs of legs with prominent spines.

Fall Armyworm Field Handbook

Identification and Management

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How to identify fall armyworm

Fall armyworm larvae (or caterpillars) are similar to caterpillars of other related pests (Figure 1). Look for the following features to determine if the caterpillar you have found in your maize is fall armyworm or belongs to another species.

- A dark head with a pale, upside-down **Y-shaped marking** (Figure 2, black circle).
- **Four raised spots shaped like a trapezium** on each body segment seen from above (Figure 3, orange circle).
- **Four spots** forming a square on the second-to-last body segment (Figure 3, red circle).
- Skin appears smooth to the touch.
- Sawdust-like material called "**frass**" is present in the maize funnel or on the leaves, tassels and cobs. Large clumps are formed during fresh feeding (Figure 4).



1



2

Inverted "Y" © Matt Bertone, NCSU



3

Raised dots on body segments © Russ Ottens, Bugwood.org



4

Clumps of frass formed during (fresh) feeding © CABI