Research Note

SPODOPTERA SUNIA (GUENEÉ) (LEPIDOPTERA: NOCTUIDAE): A NEW RECORD OF ATTACK ON CABBAGE IN PUERTO RICO

During 1988-89 *Spodoptera sunia* larvae were found attacking cabbage (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capita* L.) in experimental plots at the Puerto Rico Agricultural Experiment Station in Fortuna at Juana Diaz, P.R. Plots consisted of 28 cabbage genotypes, 14 of which were attacked. Genotypes affected were Express, Head Start, Conquest, Copenhagen Market, Blue Pak, Gourmet, Superette, Brave, Cóndor, Market Prize, Rio Verde, Pennant, Ocala and Brave Cross. Genotypes Green Cup, Prime Time, Market Victor, Showboat, PSX 17483, Río Grande, Fortuna, Market King, Olympic, Cuisto, Genesis, Taia, Vedetta and Cole Cash were not affected. The larvae feed on both old and new leaves but were especially found boring into the cabbage head. Cabbage with larvae inside the head were deformed and stunted. *Spodoptera sunia* has been previously reported as *Callierges*, *Laphygma orbicularis*, *L. caudata* and *Xylomiges sunia*. Wolcott stated that in Puerto Rico this insect was first recorded from cotton in 1918 and that Smyth reported it in 1920.

In Puerto Rico it has been reported attacking celery (*Aspidium graveolans* L.); asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis* L.); chard (*Beta vulgaris* L. var. *cycle* L.); cotton (*Gossypium barbadense* L. var. *Sea Island*); alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.); tobacco (*Nicotiana tabacum* L.); potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.); and green peas (*Pisum sativum* L.). Recently it has been detected on pepper (*Capsicum annuum* L.) (fig. 1).

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Larvae collected from plants in the field were identified by comparison following the keys of Levy and Habeck and Oliver and Chapin. In general, the larvae are extremely variable and the character which seems to be consistent and which distinguishes the species from all other Spodoptera species is the presence of a white spot in the subdorsal triangulate markings.

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