Research Note

FULMEKIOLA SERRATA *(KOBUS) (THYSANOPTERA:THRIPIDAE) A NEW SUGARCANE PEST IN PUERTO RICO*[1]

Severe thrips infestations were detected on a commercial sugarcane plantation at Yabucoa-Roig Sugarcane Mill and in experimental plots at the Gurabo Agricultural Experiment Substation in August 1988.

The thrips were located on the central whorl of sugarcane shoots, many of them on the still coiled young leaves. Feeding by thrips caused severe scars on the young leaves. When these leaves were fully opened the damage was reminiscent of that caused by mites and aphids (fig. 1). More than 100 acres planted with sugarcane in the Roig Sugarcane Mill and the experimental plots at the Gurabo Agricultural Experiment Substation were infested with this species.

Specimens were collected 10 August 1988 at the above mentioned areas and forwarded to the Taxonomic Services Unit, Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Plant Serices In stitute, USDA, Beltsville, Maryland. The speci mens were identified as *Fulmekiola serrata* (Kobus) by S. Nakahara, Research Entomologist. Voucher specimens are deposited in the above mentioned institution and in the Entomology Museum of the Crop Protection Department, Puerto Rico Agricultural Experiment Station at Río Piedras. The specimens are accessioned under the following numbers: PR Acc. No. 114-88 (Yabucoa), and PR Acc. No. 115-88 (Gurabo).

The genus *Fulmekiola* includes one single species, *F. serrata*. Its distinctive characteristics are the very prominent long regular teeth on the posterior margin of abdominal terga and sterna and the very long anteocellar setae.

Fulmekiola serrata was described by Kobus (1893)[2] from Indonesia (Java). Jacot-Guillarmod's (1974)[3] Thysanoptera Catalogue of the World listed it under the genus *Baliothrips* and gave tobacco and sugarcane as the only hosts, stating that it is a pest in sugarcane. Bhatti and Mound (1980)[4] listed this thrip from India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, Mauritius, and Pakistan. It was first discovered in the Caribbean region in 1980. Alam, Gibbs and De Boer (1982)[5] recorded it damaging sugar cane in Guadeloupe, June 1980; Barbados, September 1980; Antigua, December 1980; St. Kitts, April 3, 1981; St. Vincent, October 1981; Dominica, March 1982; Trinidad and Guyana, December 1981.

[1]Manuscript submitted to Editorial Board 31 March 1989.

[2]Kobus, J. D., 1893. Blaaspooten (Thrips) Mededeelingen van het Proefstation Ost-Java, Bijlage Archief voor de Java-Suiker Industrie (1892), No. 43: 154-58.

[3]Jacot-Guillarmod, C. F., 1974. Catalogue of the Thysanoptera of the World. Part 3. *Ann. Cape Prov. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, 7 (3): 517-976.

[4]Bhatti, J. S. and L. A. Mound, 1980. The genera of grass- and cereal-feeding Thysanoptera related to the genus *Thrips* (Thysanoptera: Thripidae). *Bull. Entomol.* 21: 1-22.

[5]Alam, M. M., I. H. Gibbs and H. G. De Boer, 1982. *Thrips* (*Fulmekiola* (= *Baliothrips*) *serrata* (Kobus) a new sugarcane pest in the Caribbean. Proc. West Indies Sugar Technol. Conf., St. Kitts-Nevis, June 14-18, 1982.

FIG. 1.—Damage to sugarcane leaf caused by *Fulmekiola serrata* (Kobus).

This species, new to Puerto Rico, can become an economically important pest of sugarcane on the island.

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