



## QUICK ID *GUIDE*

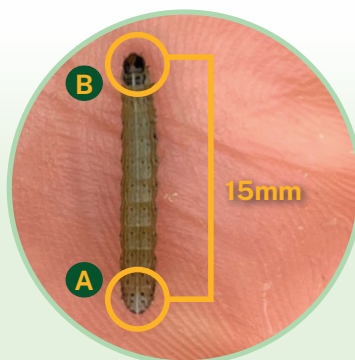
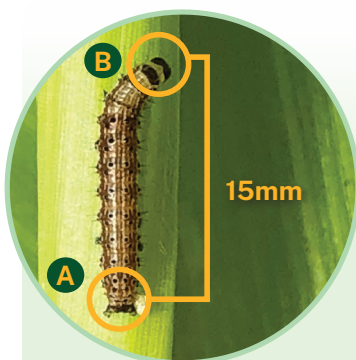
# Fall armyworm

Fall armyworm (FAW) and *Helicoverpa armigera* can appear to be very similar in field situations and small to medium larvae of these species can be particularly difficult to distinguish. There can also be significant variation between individuals of the same species.

The images below have been sent to NSW DPI entomologists for identification and the side-by-side comparisons of larvae of similar ages are provided to highlight the diagnostic features used to classify them as FAW or *H. armigera*.



Neonate (1st instar larvae) of both species are very similar but the presence of larvae can be identified from the feeding patterns on leaves. Damage from *H. armigera* usually results in 'shot holes' in the expanded leaves (above right) whereas FAW larvae cause large holes in the expanding leaves as a result of large amounts of damage from feeding activity in the whorl (above left).



These FAW larva (left) and *H. armigera* larva (far left) are mid to late 3rd instar (approx. 15mm long).

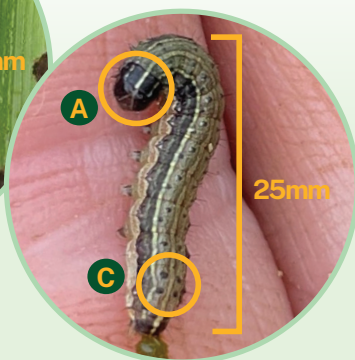
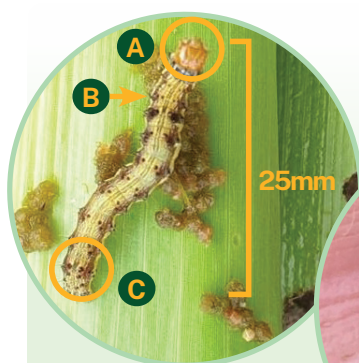
At this stage, the spots on the tail end of FAW are not yet more prominent than the spots along the rest of the body (A) and the 'collar' (narrow shield behind the head) of both species is the same colour as the head itself (B).

These larvae should be retained and reared before providing images for ID.



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These FAW larva (left) and *H. armigera* larva (far left) are mid to late 4th instar (approx. 25mm long).

In FAW the head and the collar are generally the same colour whereas the collar is a different colour to the head in *H. armigera* (A).

The 'saddle' (dark marking on the second segment behind the head) is visible in *H. armigera* and absent in FAW (B).

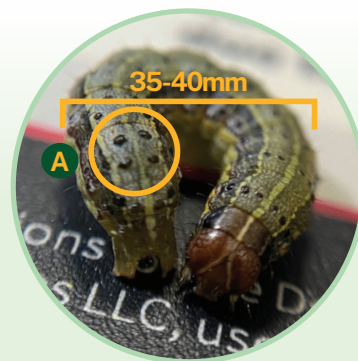
While the spots at the tail end of *H. armigera* are arranged in a square, they are the same size and colour as the spots along the rest of the body.

In a FAW larva this size, the spots on the tail end are becoming more prominent (C).



These FAW larva (right) and *H. armigera* larva (left) are 5th-6th instar (approx. 35-40mm long) and at this stage it is relatively easy to distinguish the two species.

*H. armigera* have a hairy appearance and the absence of prominent spots on the tail end compared with FAW which is smoother with four pronounced spots in the shape of a square on the tail end (A).



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