

Abstract

False codling moth (FCM) *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* Meyrick (Lepidoptera: Tortricidae) is currently the main pest of phytosanitary concern in international trade, causing rejection and decline of horticultural produce from Kenya exported to the European Union (EU). Overreliance on synthetic insecticides to control this pest is ineffective and unsustainable in the long run, whereas continuous use of pesticides results in high levels of residues in the produce. To gather farmers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices used by smallholder farmers to manage this pest, a field survey was carried out in 10 *Capsicum* sp. (Solanales: Solanaceae)-producing counties in Kenya. Data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires administered through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions involving 108 individual farmers, 20 key informants, and 10 focus group discussions. The majority of the respondents (83.33%) were aware of the FCM infesting *Capsicum* sp. About three quarters of the farmers (76.85%) reported yield losses and unmarketable quality of FCM-infested *Capsicum* sp. Most farmers interviewed (99.07%) used insecticides as a management tool. In contrast, only 39.81% of the farmers applied integrated pest management strategies including use of biological control agents and intercropping with repellent plants to control this pest. The results show that FCM is perceived as a significant threat to the horticultural industry of Kenya. Training needs for smallholder farmers and key informants to avoid overreliance on synthetic chemical pesticides and to maintain export goals to the EU were identified.