# EXPERIENCES WITH FALL ARMYWORM IN 2014: NEVER SAY NEVER

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## Abstract

Fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frujiperda* (J. E. Smith), is a sporadic pest of cotton in the southern U.S. During the 2014 growing season, fall armyworm populations reached unprecedented population densities in multiple crops. More specifically, populations of the grass strain were common across Mississippi in 2014 in multiple crops. In broadleaf crops such as cotton, infestations occurred where weed management was compromised by heavy rainfall and cool temperatures that decreased the efficacy of residual herbicides and prevented farmers from making timely post emerge applications. Infestations of numerous grass species were common in many cotton fields throughout Mississippi. The grass was commonly infested with fall armyworm larvae and in many cases larvae were at the later instars of development. When growers were able to make herbicide applications to control the grass, the fall armyworms moved into the developing cotton. Cotton was generally in the seedling to early squaring stage, and it was assumed that the Bt toxins would control the infestations. Surprisingly, a few fields needed a supplemental insecticide application to manage these infestations. Where damage occurred in dual-gene cottons, medium to large sized larvae cut plants and bored into stems near the terminal. Where it was needed, control was easily obtained with low- to mid-rates of any pyrethroid.