SIGNIFICANCE

⇒ Slug caterpillars are serious leaf eating insects of coconuts.
⇒ Outbreaks usually unpredictable and often occur over large areas for years.
⇒ Cause serious losses to farmers since damage is followed by corresponding reduction in yield of about 50%.
⇒ Yield can recover after 2 years when successful control measures are implemented.

CHARACTERISTIC DAMAGE

The larva is the destructive stage of the pest. The young larvae feed on the lower epidermis of the leaf. As they mature, the whole leaf blade is eaten leaving the midribs. In heavy infestation, the larvae may defoliate the palm.

PREDOMINANT SPECIES

PRE. YEAR 1

Fig. 1. Common slug caterpillar species

CONTROL MEASURES

a. Biological Control

Parasitoids

Fig. 2. Parasitized larvae & pupae

Predator

Fig. 3. Nymphs & adults of Eocantheca furcellata are predatory to slug caterpillar

Pathogen

Fig. 4. Diseased larvae & pupa

⇒ Presence of the naturally occurring biological control agents such as parasitoids, predators and pathogens in the field may contribute to the decline of slug caterpillar population.

b. Mechanical Control

Light Trap
⇒ Tractor and/or carabao driven roller may be used when slug caterpillar mature larvae fall to the ground for pupation. This may be done to crush the immatures of the slug caterpillar present in the vegetation under coconut.

⇒ Light traps maybe installed when adult moth of the caterpillar emerged from cocoon.

⇒ About 5 light traps may be installed per hectares

⇒ Set up light traps in the field starting from 5 pm to 2 am for white, green and orange species) while 7 – 10 pm for brown and small limacodids)

C. Cultural Control

⇒ Planting of covercrops or other leguminous intercrops under coconut enhances the population of parasitoids and predators as they feed on nectars of the crops.

D. Use of Resistant Varieties

⇒ Catigan and Tacunan varieties (dwarf) are found resistant cultivars to slug caterpillar

E. Chemical Control

⇒ Chemical spraying may be resorted to (case to case basis) but not compulsory especially when the biological control agents are numerous enough to minimized slug caterpillar population. This may not be feasible on tall palms.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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