Developments in IPM programmes for vegetable brassicas in Fiji, Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea

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Abstract

IPM extension workshops were held in Fiji in September 1999 and February 2000 for researchers and extension staff from Fiji, Cook Islands and Papua New Guinea. IPM teams were formed and new national programme activities are being supported by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Plant Protection Service. Technical recommendations include the introduction of a range of selective insecticides to maximise the impact of the key biological control agents of diamondback moth (DBM). Communication recommendations include the IPM teams lobbying government for support of IPM and also lobbying the agrochemical industry, importers and retailers for reduced costs and smaller packaging of selective insecticides. Activities underway in all three countries include training sessions for extension staff and farmers on recognition of key pests and beneficial organisms and proper use of insecticides. In Fiji, field trials are underway to develop action thresholds for the key pests, Plutella xylostella and Crocidolomia binotalis and to evaluate the use of selective insecticides, particularly those with short withholding periods. In the Cook Islands, IPM is included in official Ministry of Agriculture policy and has led to increased staff to support IPM activities, the importing and registration of “IPM-friendly” agrochemicals and the re-release of Diadegma semiclausum on Rarotonga Island. The Ministry of Agriculture has decided not to introduce Cotesia plutellae into the Cook Islands because of concerns over its specificity. In Papua New Guinea, establishment surveys undertaken after releases of D. semiclausum imported earlier from Fiji and the Philippines show that D. semiclausum has dispersed naturally up to 15–20 km from initial release sites in the Eastern and Western Highlands. The Brassica IPM programme in P.N.G. has been scaled down due to lack of funding and staff shortages. Work that is continuing includes mass rearing and releases of D. semiclausum, publishing IPM recommendations (extension leaflets) and field trials on new insecticides.