FARMER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF CITRUS INSECT PESTS IN KENYA

[SHORT COMMUNICATION]

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ABSTRACT

A formal citrus insect pest survey was conducted in two citrus growing districts of Kenya, Bungoma and Machakos, to determine important insect pests of citrus and evaluate the pest control practices used by small-scale farmers. Observations were made on the insect pests and their damage, methods of pest control practiced, pesticide products used, sources of farming knowledge and how decisions to control the insect pests. Farmers identified important pests as aphids (*Toxoptera citricidus* Kirkaldy), psyllids (*Trioza erytreae* Del Guercio), citrus black flies (*Aleurocanthus woglumi* Ashby), false codling moths (*Cryptophlebia leucotreta*), soft green scales (*Coccus viridis* Green), citrus woolly whiteflies (*Aleurothrixus flocossus* Maskell), mites (*Phyllocoptruta oleivora* McGregor), fruit flies (*Ceratitis spp*), leaf miners (*Phyllocnitis citrella* Stainton), and orange dogs (*Papillio demodocus*) in decreasing order of importance. Farmers' management practices included indigenous traditional knowledge and mainly pesticides. Farmers mainly used their own experience and that of their neighbours to decide on what to use and when to deal with the insect pest situations. Current insect pest management practices by citrus farmers are inadequate to deal with insect pest and disease situations within farms. These findings have an implication in the spread and management of huanglongbing disease (HLB) and citrus tristeza vectored by psyllids and aphids, respectively.

Key words: Citrus, Farmer perceptions Insect pests