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FALL ARMYWORM (*Spodoptera frugiperda* Smith) - A NEW PEST DETECTED IN ROMANIA

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Fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda* Smith) is a major agricultural pest in tropical and subtropical areas, originating from the American continent. In the last years this pest has spread in the African continent, India, and many countries from East Asia. In European Union is regulated as a quarantine pest according to Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2019/2072 and is nominated as a priority pest in the Commission delegated regulation (EU) 2019/1702. In 2021 this pest was reported for the first time, in the Canary Islands (Spain). More recent reports confirm the presence of the pest in some countries from southern Europe, such as Portugal (Madeira), Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey. This pest has a high migration capacity, spreading in new territories in a short period. However, it seems fall armyworms can't overwinter in temperate climates, but can migrate during the summer from the southern regions. In 2023, during a survey carried out in Fundulea, Călărași County by the National Agricultural Research and Development Institute, for different pests of corn, including *S. frugiperda* in a trap were detected suspicious adults of fall armyworm. For the survey, it was used pheromone traps, VRAL+ type, from the Csalomon® (Hungary) which was deployed in a maize field from the Southeast of the country. The observations started at the end of May and finished at the end of November. The morphological analyses of the adults were done at the National Phytosanitary Laboratory in Romania and the confirmation of the results was performed by the European Union Reference Laboratory, through ANSES (France) from the morphological point of view and AGES (Austria) for molecular analyses. Both types of analyses confirmed the presence of the fall armyworm for the first time in Romania. The larvae or eggs weren't detected dur-

ing the observation of the maize field in the summer or the beginning of autumn. In 2024 and 2025 this pest wasn't detected in the traps placed in the maize field. A possible explanation for the late trapping of the pest in the middle of autumn is the migration of adults from southern European countries where *S. frugiperda* was previously detected. Further studies are necessary to clarify the introduction pathways. Further studies are necessary in the next years in Romania concerning this quarantine pest.

Keywords: fall armyworm, first detection, Romania

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