

# Yellow Stem Borer

## Recognize the problem

Rice plants from the seedling to maximum tillering stages that have been attacked at the base of the stem have deadhearts. Deadhearts are the dried up central shoots of tillers on the rice plant before flowering. If attack occurs after flowering stage, the panicle with the rice grain will die and turn whitish/pale in colour, and so it is called whitehead.

## Background

Eggs are white in color and covered with brownish hairs of the female moth. The larvae have a pale hairless yellow body with a small orange head. Pupate occurs in the stem that is whitish to pale yellowish green and the period ranges from 6 - 10 days. The adult female is whitish to yellowish in color. It has a pair of clear black spots in the middle of each forewing. The male is smaller and dull in color. It has two rows of black spots at the tip of the forewings.

Mature larva. (Photo by IRRI)



## Management

- Plough the field after harvest, to destroy the pupae in the rice straw and soil.
- Destroy eggs during transplantation.
- Harvesting at ground level removes most larvae of all species.
- Burning is only partially effective because after harvest the larvae may move to below ground level
- Planting at the right time, together with the other farmers
- Apply fertilizer appropriately, not too much N fertilizer
- Preserve beneficial insects.
- Observe the field every 7 days and count the number of deadhearts per 10 plants and whiteheads per 10 plants
- In case the measures mentioned above are failed, use less toxic insecticide by following recommendations of a technical expert.
- Use insecticides such as fipronil or Diazinon or Cartap hydrochloride; follow label recommendations.

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Scirpophaga incertulas* (Walker)

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Cambodia



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